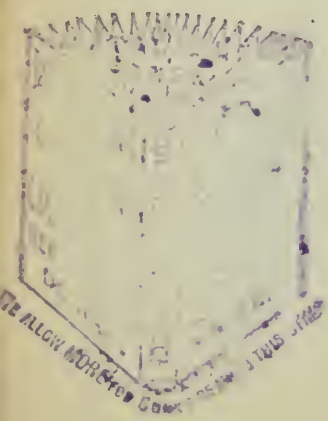


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THE
PATIENCE
OF HOPE

DORA
GREENWELL

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THE PATIENCE OF HOPE

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BY

DORA GREENWELL

NEW EDITION



LONDON
GIBBINGS AND COMPANY
18 BURY STREET, W.C.

1894



Edinburgh: T. and A. CONSTABLE, Printers to Her Majesty.

To J. E. B.

‘A te principium, tibi desinet.’

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‘Te sine nil altum mens inchoat.’

1859.

PART FIRST

‘ He shall grow up as a tender plant,
As a root out of a dry ground.’

ISAIAH liii. 2



IN Jesus Christ all contradictions are reconciled ;' yet in Him, also, and in all that is connected with His person and office, we are met by a strange contradiction—a clashing of opposing attributes. 'Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? He who hath trodden down the people in his wrath, and trampled upon them in his fury.' Is this one with Him the Man of sorrows and of humiliation, of silence and long-suffering, despised of men and rejected, giving his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair ! Is this Lord to whom the Lord hath spoken, 'Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool ;' He concerning whom God speaks

thus comfortably unto Zion, 'Behold, thy King cometh, meek, having salvation, lowly, riding upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass;' is He, the upholder of the bruised reed, one with Him who shall bruise the nations with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel? is the Interceder one with the Avenger? the Lamb that taketh away the sins of the world, one with Him whose wrath a guilty world shall not be able to abide?

'Kiss the Son lest he be angry.' Can we wonder that some among the Jews should have imagined there would be two Messiahs, the suffering one and the triumphant? And what is the Incarnation but the fulfilment of these mighty yet contending predictions? What is the life of our Lord and Saviour upon earth but the conflict of glory and humiliation? 'The birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise:' glorious in fact, yet of ambiguous circumstance; of kingly descent, yet lowly parentage; born in the appointed city, yet called a Nazarene; cradled in a manger, yet worshipped even there by sage and monarch; dying a death of ignominy, yet, even upon the Cross, in Hebrew

and Greek and Latin—the three living, ruling tongues of time—proclaimed to be a King and a Saviour. ‘*This is Jesus ;*’ possessed through life of boundless resources, and exerting them on behalf of others, yet Himself submitting to the ordinary conditions of the humanity He had taken upon Him ; hungering, thirsting, wearied, in all things choosing to be made like unto His brethren ; Lord of nature and of time, yet waiting upon the restraints they impose ; overcoming death, yet obedient to that which He overcame. ‘ He saved others, himself he cannot save.’

And as with the Master, so with them that are of his Household. The history of the Christian Church is a hieroglyph or picture-writing, to which the life of Jesus Christ on earth is as it were the Rosetta stone, making, *when once mastered*, all the rest plain. The present aspect of the Church, its past history, the records of individual Christian experience, offer us many sorrowful problems ; but how was it in the days when the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and man *beheld* God’s glory, full of grace and truth ? Was there not even then something which corresponds with

what we now see and feel?—the final and absolute contending with the temporal and accidental, and often apparently overcome by them; lofty principles out of harmony with the things which surround them—delay, vicissitude, incompleteness, ‘the something still which prompts the eternal sigh.’ Is there not now in Christ something which corresponds with what we trace in the gospel narrative; something, I say, *which disappoints an apparently reasonable hope* like that of the devout¹ Jews for the temporal Messiah; ‘disappoints it to fulfil it far more gloriously, more completely, yet in a way that contradicts our natural expectations? Even then, as now, did Christ delay, withdraw, even hide Himself from those that loved and followed Him, ‘a deceiver, and yet true.’

The history of Divine grace in the heart and in the world is illustrated by the book which St. John received from the angel, sweet to the taste, bitter in the working. Is it the Jew only who looks in Christ for the temporal deliverer, the restorer of

¹ It is difficult, perhaps, for a Christian to place himself at the point of view they occupied so as to see *how* reasonable this hope was.

paths to dwell in, the bringer again, like David, of all that the enemy hath carried away? What finder of Jesus is there who has not in his first joy exclaimed with St. Andrew, 'We have found the Messias, that is, the Christ'? What follower of Jesus is there who does not learn, as did those first brethren, that 'he must be followed to prison and to death'?

When Jesus says to His disciples, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation,' He speaks from insight rather than foresight; as one who, knowing what was the heart of man, sees in Himself the bringer of a sword within it, that shall never leave it until all things concerning Him are fulfilled.

Let us consider this—that when Christ took our nature upon Him, *He took it as it was*; He did not re-create before assuming it, but assumed it in order to its re-creation, so that being found in fashion as a man he brought Himself into connection, yet into collision with weakness, with error, with decay, *with all that belongs to man*. The conflict of Christianity is the harder because it is civil; it has allied itself with that against which it must contend to the death, or be itself overcome of it.

Hence its fierce collisions, its sorrowful victories ; hence too its still more sad, more fatal compromises, its unholy, unhallowing alliances, 'the Woman sitting upon the Beast'¹—the compact between the Church and the World, at the sight of which he who had learnt so many secrets from his beloved Master, yet 'wondered with great admiration.' And if the world itself is a field too narrow for the meeting-shock of such antagonists as grace and nature, how fares it in the conflict of which all that passes in the outward Church is but the history 'writ large ;' when these two, contrary the one to the other, meet and wrestle within the heart as those who contend, not for mastery but for life itself? Woe, in this battle, to the vanquished ! woe also to the victor ! 'For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood, but *this* shall be with burning and fuel of fire.'

Ellis tells us that during his stay in Madagascar he was visited by a native of rank, himself friendly to Christianity, and who had suffered deeply in his family relations in the persecution through which,

¹ See Williams on the *Apocalypse*.

as through a fiery and bloody dawn, its light so lately broke upon that island. This man looked at the brother missionaries long and earnestly, when, after almost mechanically giving them his hands, there came over his countenance, Ellis says, 'an expression such as I have never witnessed in any human being; an intensity of feeling, neither ecstasy nor terror, but an apparent blending of both; while during the whole interview, which was long, there was a *strange uneasiness* mingled with an *evident satisfaction*.' Was there not here, even in the twilight of faith and reason, a recognition of Christ, and of all that He comes to work; an intuition in this half-enlightened, half-instructed soul of what remains long hidden from Christ's wise and prudent ones—the stern necessity of the Christian covenant, that Christ, in His members, as once aforetime in His human person, should suffer *many things* before He can enter into His glory! It is hard for Humanity to receive this lesson, to accept this inevitable condition of its initiation into its true life—the *laying down of that very life, that we may receive it again in Christ*. Hard for us, as it was for the first disciples, even

with Christ our Master going 'before us' on the foreseen path, to understand Him when He speaks of suffering, of humiliation, of death itself shortly to be accomplished. Here too, upon the way, will there be reasonings, surmisings, something too within the heart which, with the ardent spirit of St. Peter, will resist, even rebuke the teaching of its beloved Lord ; which will say unto him, 'Be this far from thee !' For what is this which Christ demands from His disciple? *Even that which He Himself gave.* 'Sacrifice and meat-offering thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein.' The idea of propitiation, or the giving up of something which we hold least precious in order that we may retain that which we prize most of all, upon which the sacrifices under the old law and those of all natural religions are founded, finds no place in the Christian Covenant. For to confirm this between God and man, *the most precious thing of all was offered and was accepted ;* 'He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.'

And thus it is necessary that this Man also should have something to offer. The need of

sacrifice is not taken away, only its nature is changed, exalted, deepened; and mild as is the genius of the New Dispensation, its knife goes closer to the heart than that of the elder one, which we are accustomed to think of as so stern and exacting. Behold the goodness and severity of Christ! 'Skin for skin,' saith Job of old, 'all that a man hath will he give for his life.' And it is this very life which Christ asks us to lay down for Him; this life of which He tells us that he who loveth it shall lose it, and he who loseth it for His sake shall keep it unto life eternal.

And when we speak in a spiritual sense of Life, the laying it down and taking it again, we speak not of mere existence, but of that which is to every one of us the root by which we hold; that which is to each individual heart confessedly 'no vain thing, for it is our life.' Take it away, and all beside is gone, 'for in the blood is the life;' in the affections, in the energies which send their sap through the whole thinking, feeling being. And it is to the root of *this* tree of man's life, wrapped round with its most intimate fibres—even this, be it what it may, for which we would

give, for which we would forego all the world beside—*the will of man*, that the axe of Christ is laid.

The disciple must be as his master, the servant as his lord. Why was the sacrifice of Christ's death so pre-eminently meritorious, so infinitely prevailing with God? why do the sacred writers attribute an efficacy to it which it was impossible that the sufferings of unconscious though innocent victims could possess? Because, to say nothing of the intrinsic value of this sacrifice, it was, above all others that have been ever offered, a free, conscious, and willing one. The Man Christ Jesus was, of all created beings—as far as we know their history—the only one who chose his own destiny, who foreknew and accepted its full conditions; who saw a great need and responded to it: 'Lo! I come.' 'My leave,' said the acute Frenchwoman, 'was not asked before I came into the world,'—a saying in which all that the human heart can urge against God and His appointments lies hid. Why should I be called upon to endure, to forego so much? Had the choice been permitted me, I might possibly have declined it.

Our Saviour's leave was asked. His fulfilment of His Father's will was voluntary ; He saw the end from the beginning ; *saw it even in the beginning*, and walked onwards to that end, seeing His own destiny and feeling His own freedom. 'I have power,' He says, 'to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again.'

But how is Christ's follower to obtain this freedom? How is this great transfer, lying at the very heart of our spiritual life, the exchange of our own will for a better one, to be effected for a being like man, impelled alike by the weakness and the strength of his whole nature to cleave unto the dust from whence he was at first taken? At this point we must pause a moment, feeling that our subject has drawn us into a desolate, even awful region, where, like the traveller high up among the mountains, we would fain hold the breath and hurry onwards lest a word too lightly spoken should bring down the impending avalanche. For all thoughts that lead us from the circumference of faith to its centre, draw us insensibly, and with a force that becomes irresistible the nearer we approach that centre, to the sacrifice of

the death of Christ. *Motus rerum est rapidus extra locum, placidus in loco.* There is no rest for the soul of the believer till it settles for ever on this magnet. No rest ; I would say, also, no progress for the soul until it receives within it this great Motive Power ; receives it not only as a fulfilled fact, but accepts it in its boundless consequences, and recognises as first among them that of its own 'baptism into his death.' The disciple is not above his master, neither is the servant above his lord, *nevertheless every one that is perfect shall be as his master.* Oh, blessed saying ! oh, promise like unto that made to the two chosen disciples, 'Ye shall indeed drink of my cup ;' and what if our Lord's cup should prove to be the cup of vinegar mingled with gall, it is none the less the cup of blessing and of full unreserved communion. 'Kiss me with the kisses of thy mouth, for thy love is better than wine.'

And it is our personal initiation into this mystery of sacrifice which is as regards the life which is in Christ Jesus its true sacrament, enabling the soul to pass into real and intimate communion with Him. Christ our Passover has been long slain for

us, but how do His people for the most part keep the feast? *By way of commemoration only.*

But it is they who eat of the sacrifices, and they only, who are partakers of the Altar. It is not enough that we show forth our Lord's death until His coming again: to draw out the depths of this great act of love, we must so unite ourselves to it as to learn what St. Paul meant when he spoke of 'filling up that which was behind of the sufferings of Christ.' It is the bearing of the cross, the sharing of the passion, that enables the believer to meet and understand his Lord; 'for we, being many, are one Body,' and without participation there can be no communion.

All that are in Christ must be made to drink into one Spirit, yet often and often perhaps must He return and ask His chosen ones, 'Are ye able to drink of my cup?' before that free, calm answer can be given, 'We are able;' and many offerings must be laid upon His altar with tears and weeping before the *sacrifices of joy* are brought there. For, as Christ was made like unto us, we must *be made like unto Him*, even at the cost of much that is grievous to natural feeling. His coming within

the soul is the bringing in of a new order, and when was there a painless transition, a bloodless revolution? It gives a new aim to the will of man; it sets a fresh goal before his affections, and one oftentimes to be reached only by passing over the dead body of all that made up their former life.

‘Who will lead me into the strong city, who will bring me into Edom?’ Before Christ can gain the citadel of Man’s will and affections, many pleasant places must be laid waste before Him, many fair and flourishing outworks be brought low. These are hard sayings, and if they are met by the rejoinder, *Who can bear them?* the answer is already written, *They to whom they are addressed by Christ, and they only.* ‘He who forsaketh not all that he hath cannot be my disciple.’ Christ does not say he cannot be my servant, does not say he cannot be my son, but he cannot be my disciple. There are many gains, many losses in Christ, over and above that great inappreciable loss of the salvation of the soul in him. This final aim may be attained, and yet the hearers who, for love of a great or of a small possession,

depart upon that saying, 'Sell that thou hast, and follow me,' may have abundant reason for going away sorrowful. We are made poor by what we miss as well as by what we lose;¹ a little more patience, a little more constancy, and to what might we not have attained! to what tender intimacy, to what satisfying communications, to what power, what rest, what freedom!

The more closely we follow Christ, the more perseveringly do certain truths present themselves to us—truths with which we commune, but dare not for a while receive in their full import, because

¹ You say in one of your letters, 'I feel a solemn pathos in the lament which the Lord takes up over the defection of His people: "Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, that Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries;" and after this follows: "I should have fed them with the finest wheat flour, and with honey out of the stony rock should I have satisfied them." And what, but for a like failure in perseverance, might have been *our* portion, "the finest of the wheat, and honey out of the rock," and *that Rock*, St. Paul tells us, *was Christ*. To hearken diligently unto Him, to walk in His ways, is plainly pointed out as the means through which we first obtain victory over our spiritual enemies, and then arrive at the feast of good things, prepared for those only who have come thus far. "I will bring them into my banqueting-house, where my banner over them shall be love."'—J. E. B.

we know they would lead us whither we would not. Yet they come again and again, offering themselves to us, like the Sibyl of old, each time under harder conditions, till at last we accept them on their own terms. A Christian may love his Master truly, and be yet unprepared to follow him whithersoever he goeth. How can two walk in a way unless they be agreed? and the enmity between Christ and Nature is not yet so wholly slain, but that there may be on the believer's part conscious shrinkings and reservations; he knows that it would be hard to take this thing up, hard, perhaps impossible, to let this thing go, even at the command of Christ Himself. This crisis of spiritual life, full of pain and perplexity, is one with which our Saviour may deeply sympathise, for He knoweth what is in man; yet it is none the less a temper which 'is not worthy of Him.' He does not trust himself to a divided heart, and of this the owner of such a heart is well aware. So that there arises within it a secret craving for whatever may detach and loosen these bonds from which no effort of its own can free it; a desire like that which St. Paul so fervently expresses *for the fellowship of his Lord's*

sufferings, the conformity to his Lord's death, so that by any means it may attain to spiritual resurrection with Him. There comes a moment, in which the soul awaking up into the sense of the deep antagonism between grace and nature will exclaim, as seeing no other way of deliverance, 'Let us go *unto him* that we may also die with him ;' let us know that we live in Christ if it be through being sharers in His pain.

'They were all baptized in the cloud and in the sea ;' this is the register of all Christ's chosen ones ; the pledge of their initiation into that covenant 'whose promises, whose rewards, whose very beatitudes are sufferings.' *Why* does St. Paul so rejoice,¹ so delight himself in weakness, in persecution, in affliction, but because he knows that *without these* he can attain to no close intimacy with his beloved Lord ? And if this be a sore lesson, is it not one for which the heart may be in some degree prepared even by its own natural experience ? Do not trials and sorrows (also, it is true, deep joys) shared between two friends, partings, dangers, above all the having stood

¹ Note A.

together in the presence of death, deepen the channel of our affection in deepening that of our existence? Are not such moments sacramental, bringing us nearer each other in bringing us nearer God, from whom the poor unrealities of time, *unworthy of us as they are of Him*, too much divide us? It is often through some keen, even desolating shock, the blasting of the breath of God's chiding, that the deep foundations of our nature are first discovered to us. When the veil of the temple, even this poor worn garment of our humanity, is rent from the top to the bottom, we catch glimpses of the inner glory; the rocks are riven, the graves open, they who have long slept in the dust come forth and reveal to us awful and tender secrets, of which otherwise we should have known nothing. 'They who love,' as says St. Chrysostom, 'if it be but man, not God,' will know what I mean, when I speak of joys springing out of the very heart of anguish, and holding to it by a common and inseparable life; will understand how it comes that the pale flowers which thrust themselves out of the ruins of hope, of endeavour, of affection, yes, even out of the mourn-

ful wreck of intellect itself, should breathe out a deep and intimate fragrance, such as the broad wealth of air and sunshine never yet gave,—

‘ For in things
That move past utterance, tears ope all their springs,
Nor are there in the powers that all life bears
More true interpreters of all than tears.’

It needs but a little consideration to perceive that devotion, self-sacrifice, all the higher moods and energies even of natural feeling, are only *possible* to seasons of adversity. ‘ Deep calleth unto deep.’ We need not look far into man’s nature to see that its true wealth does not lie so near the surface, but that the smooth, grassy levels of prosperity hide riches such as only a shock can develop. The history of both nations and churches shows us how the very strain and pressure of calamity can force up social existence to an otherwise unimaginable height of nobleness ; but we must look yet deeper than this, to understand the strange affinity which Christianity has at all times betrayed with whatever is most contradictory to natural feeling, making it to choose pain, and weakness, and infirmity, as its natural soil and climate. And here experience, rather than reason, must be our

guide ; for what is there in pain, considered in itself, that is purifying, far less ennobling? Its connexion with all that is most precious to Christian life is incidental rather than inherent, and is to be traced to that deep original wound of our nature which has set the ideals of Christ and humanity so far apart, that the wealth of the one can only be attained through the minishing of the other. If the house of David is to wax stronger, the house of Saul must wax weaker from day to day. And hence it is that every fuller development of Christ's spirit within man *necessarily* takes a self-subduing character, making asceticism under one form or other inseparable from the true Christian life. For the glory of the terrestrial is one, the glory of the celestial is another. The triumph of Nature lies in the carrying out of its own will, in identification with some great object, in adhesion to some lofty aim. The triumph of Christ is placed in the subjugation of that very will, in acquiescence, in disentanglement ; in the stretching forth of the hands, so that another may gird us and carry us whither we would not.¹

¹ Note B.

The character which Christ forms within the heart is one at variance with our ideas of natural greatness ; His rule opposes itself as much to the higher as to the lower instincts of human nature. And that this should have been most clearly seen by thinkers looking at Christianity from without, ought not to make us careless of the truths they disclose ; for intellectual and spiritual contemplation alike lead up to clear, calm summits, and upon them are strange meetings undreamt of by the dwellers in the valleys and the plains below. The keen intuition of the thinker places him in possession of truths which the lowly Christian has learned upon his knees ; and though these two may distrust and be mutually repelled from each other, they have none the less a common standing ground,—

‘ Their speech is one, their witnesses agree.’

The sober Christian may possibly feel a shock in finding Novalis describe his faith as a foe ‘ to art, to science, even to enjoyment ;’ yet does not his own daily experience prove that the holding of the one thing needful involves the letting go of many things lovely and desirable, and that in thought,

as well as in action, he must go on 'ever narrowing his way, *avoiding much*'?¹ And this, not because his intellect is darkened to perceive beauty and excellence, or his affections dulled to embrace them, but because human life and human capacity are bounded things; the heart can be devoted but to *one* object; and the winning of the great prizes of earthly endeavour asks for an intensity of purpose, which in the Christian has found another centre.

And more than this, the rule of Christ is not only exclusive but restrictive, and though it would carry us among too wide and distant fields to enter upon this subject as it deserves, we need not look far into either literature or art to see to how many of their happiest energies this rule opposes itself. Their spirit is a free spirit, impatient of any yoke. How much, for instance, of the greatness of Shakespeare and Goethe consists in a wide Naturalism, which, as it were, finds room within it for all things, not only depicting them, but in some measure delighting in them *as they are*? Could this genial abandonment co-exist

¹ W. B. Scott.

with a deepened moral consciousness, far less, surely, with the simplicity and severity of Christ?

Again: to a person who has seen in Christianity a certain engaging moral and social aspect, and has not looked into it much deeper, what Goethe says of it as being 'founded upon the reverence for that which is beneath us, the veneration of the hated, the contradictory, and the avoided,' will appear perverse and one-sided. Yet not so, surely, to him who has been accustomed to recognise his Lord's features in those of the forlorn, the ignorant, and the despised—to him who has found that the print of his Master's footsteps, if tracked with any degree of faithfulness, will carry his own far out of the path of pleasure and distinction, and leave him amid scenes and among objects in which, save for this powerful attraction, he would have found nothing to delight in or to desire. For Christianity, though it may at certain periods and in certain persons reveal itself under a splendid and engaging aspect, so as to command the homage¹ of the world with which it is at variance, remains true to its first condition, be-

¹ Note C.

ginning at Bethlehem, 'small among the cities of Judah,' and ending upon Calvary between the two thieves. Whenever it has been joined, as it has been joined so often, with the pomp and riches and glory of this world, this has been but a state-alliance, from which its heart has fled, to the cell of the lonely monk, to the workshop of the humble artisan, to some little band of persecuted men—to such as, whether solitary or in families,

'Loving Jesus for His own sake,'

have been content for His sake to be men wondered at.¹ How many of the sparks at which great

¹ 'He who far off beholds another dancing,
Even he who dances best, and all the time
Hears not the music that he dances to,
Thinks him a madman, apprehending not
The law which moves his else eccentric motion ;
So he that 's in himself insensible
Of love's sweet influence, misjudges him
Who moves according to love's melody.
And knowing not that all these sighs and tears,
Ejaculations and impatiences,
*Are necessary changes of a measure
Which the divine musician plays, may call
The lover crazy, which he would not do,
Did he within his own heart hear the tune
Played by the great musician of the world.'*

CALDERON, translated by FITZGERALD.

fires have been kindled, even now enlightening and warming the world, have been struck from the hearts and brains of men counted fools and fanatics in their own generation? Christ is favourable to the simple and needy. When we look into His Kingdom, we see that many of its mightiest enterprises, now ripening to evident perfection, have been begun by a few gathered together in His name, and these few, perhaps, neither wise, nor rich, nor noble. Yet even now, as during our Lord's life on earth, all the lowliness of His aspect does not conceal the loftiness of His claims, nor blind the world to the fact that these are the claims of one who, coming in to sojourn, has made Himself *altogether* a ruler and a judge over it. 'Whom makest thou thyself?' it will still ask. And this question will be followed by a demand prompted by kindred enmity, 'Why makest thou us to doubt? if thou be the Christ, show thyself openly.'

And there is much, truly, in the condition of the Church since our Saviour left it, to remind us of the plant Linnæus speaks of, perfect in its structure, yet showing neither fruit nor blossom

above the earth, though it puts forth many beneath it, blanched, from the darkness of their life. 'It doth not yet appear what we shall be.' Humanity, even at the voice of Christ, comes forth bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and as one that hath been dead four days. Therefore we need not wonder if in such a resurrection there should be paroxysms; if there should be in every great awakening unto Christ, something to give room for the scoffings of the profane, the doubts and surmisings of the prudent. Christ does not at once remove the enmity which He finds. He must first bind the strong man; and before the strength of nature is subdued and disciplined to carry out the behests of grace, there is a struggle—revealing itself among the poor of Christ's flock, unused to restrain or analyse their own emotions, in forms which may appear strange and exceptionable, but from which, under one form or another, none, in whose spirit Christ lives, can escape. For the heart and the world, until renewed after His likeness, are still heathen in all but in name; exorcism must precede baptism, and the baptism from our Lord's hand is that wherewith He him-

self was baptized—*signed with the sign of the cross*.¹

And while these thoughts throw an incidental light upon much that is mysterious in our spiritual life, they draw us to the consideration of that deeper mystery which underlies it all—the structure, the schematism of our faith, which reveals itself through the fair and often smiling surface of Christianity as the grey rock in some mountain district crowns every summit, and thrusts itself even through the sheep-covered slopes, in keen contrast with their peace and verdure. When man finds that if he would do God's will, however imperfectly, he must offer up this continual sacrifice, *the sacrifice of his own will*, his thoughts are irresistibly carried to rest upon that One offering up of a higher than any human will,² by which Christ has perfected for ever them that are sanctified. The more deeply we feel the existing contradiction between God's will and that of His

¹ Adalbert, the martyred apostle of Prussia, slain by the fierce Wends, stretched forth both his arms in dying, saying, 'Jesus, receive thou me,' and fell with his face to the ground in the form of a cross, thus, Carlyle says, setting his mark upon that heathen country.

² See Heb. x. 10.

creature, the deeper becomes our sense of the need of somewhat to take it away, so that the heart draws near to a truth unapproachable by the intellect—*the necessary death of Christ*. All things in nature, as well as all things in grace, point to a Redeemer. Nature struggles but cannot speak; she remains in bondage with her children, dumb like them and beautiful. Humanity has found a voice, but where, save for Christ, would she find an answer? She has showed Him of her wound, her grievous, incurable hurt, and how has He consoled her? Even by showing her His—
'Reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side.'

And as the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, so does our daily experience become a school, teaching us the same deep lesson which the book of the Old Testament unfolds. The events of human life, and the great facts which revelation discloses, cast reciprocal light upon each other, so that the believer's course as he advances is ever instructing him, like the Earlier Dispensation, through hint, and sign, and shadow, in the mysteries on which all the visible dealings of God are grounded.

We begin to see that the whole teaching of the human race by God is based, like the prophetic songs of the Old Covenant, upon a gigantic parallelism ;¹ that as the Type is not a mere Sign, but has a *real*² *though unseen* connection with the fact it shadows forth, so has that fact also its correlative lying deep in the nature of God and man, and testifying to the essential unity of those natures. And as through the awful imagery which, under the rites and ceremonies of the Old Dispensation, prefigured the stupendous event of redemption, we discern a mighty underworking which threw these figures of sacrifice and atonement to the surface, *and could not have appeared in any other* ; so, as our Christian consciousness deepens, do the things with which we are daily conversant take up

¹ Note D.

² Differing in this from a symbol, which being merely an *idea shown*, a species of shorthand or figure-writing, need possess, it is obvious, no other than an arbitrary connection with the thing it stands for. A rose, for instance, once adopted, for whatever reason, as the emblem of secrecy, always conveys that idea to the mind which, in the absence of any natural association between the two things, has once received them in connexion. But it is far otherwise with a type, which is, as Warburton says, ‘a prophecy in action, one in nature with that which it represents.’—See on this subject the *Divine Legation*, 9th Book.

a mute significance ; so does all in life, that once appeared without bearing on our higher destinies, begin to arrange itself in the pattern of heavenly things, ' the pattern showed us in the mount.'

And though the great events of Incarnation and Redemption, casting light upon all that had gone before them, *need themselves*,¹ according to Gaussen's fine saying, *to be illumined by a light not yet risen*, though the Dispensation of glory has yet to illustrate that of grace, it is in the heart that the day-star must now arise.

And in every believing heart, the gradual turning of that heart to Christ, casts as it were an oblique light on the sacred revelations of Scripture, by awakening within it the sense of sin, the need of expiation, and the want of a better righteousness than our own to meet a standard, which even man, when once renewed in aim and feeling, consciously aspires to. So that the heart accepts Christ because it needs Him, even while the mind may be unable to receive Him fully, because the orbit of this Star is so extended as to carry it beyond the sphere of human intelligence. 'For

¹ Note E.

to this end Jesus Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.' We know not upon how many points Redemption touches ; what unseen worlds, what unborn generations, what undeveloped forms of being it embraces. We know not to what Warfare, to what Accomplishment our Lord referred when He spoke those words, 'It is finished.' We know not, in short, as Butler says, what in the works and counsels of God are ends, and what means to a further end, or how what appears to us as final may be initial with Him. But we see enough around us, and within us, to show that it was necessary that Christ should suffer many things, and after that enter into His glory. Enough to learn that we shall find no higher thing above, shall pierce to no deeper thing below, than the Cross and its solemn and tender teachings. If we would climb up into heaven, it is there ; if we would go down into hell, it is there also. He alone among men who has clasped this great mystery of grief and love to his bosom, sees, if it be as yet but through a glass darkly, how pain and love, yes, joy also, *all things that have a living*

root in humanity, come to bloom under its shadow. And how love that cannot die and faith that grows to certainty, and hope that maketh not ashamed, root themselves about it, with all fair things that wither in life, and noble things for which it has no room. 'I took,' said Luther, 'for the symbol of my theology, a seal on which I had engraven a cross, with a heart in its centre ; the cross is black to indicate the sorrows, even unto death, through which the Christian must pass, *but the heart preserves its natural colour*, for the Cross does not extinguish nature, it does not kill, but give life. *Justus fide vivet, sed fide crucifixi*. The heart is placed in the midst of a white rose, which signifies the joy, peace, and consolation that faith gives ; *but the rose is white and not red*, because it is not the joy and peace of the world, but that of spirits.'

'Whoso is wise will ponder these things, and he shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.'

SHOW me more love, my dearest Lord,

Oh, turn away thy clouded face !

Give me some secret look or word

That may betoken love and grace ;

No day or time is black to me

But that wherein I see not Thee :

Show me more love ; *a clouded face*

Strikes deeper than an angry blow.

Love me and kill me by thy grace,

I shall not much bewail my woe.

But even to be

In heaven unloved of Thee

Were hell in heaven for to see ;

Then hear my cry, and help afford ;

Show me more love, my dearest Lord.

Show me more love, my dearest Lord,

I cannot think, nor speak, nor pray ;

Thy work stands still ; my strength is stored

In Thee alone ; oh, come away !

Show me thy beauties, *call them mine,*

My heart and tongue will soon be Thine.

Show me more love, or if my heart

Too common be for such a guest,

Let thy good Spirit by its art

Make entry and put out the rest.

For 'tis thy nest ;

Then he 's of heaven possest

That heaven hath in his breast.

Then hear my cry, and help afford ;

Show me more love, my dearest Lord !


AN OLD POEM.

PART SECOND

‘And Joseph knew his brethren,
But they knew not him.’

GEN. xlii. 8



HEN the Past and the Future cheat us, it is through a charm to which we consciously abandon ourselves: we know how much the landscape gains in each case from the atmosphere through which we view it. But the Present is the true deceiver; its clear, cold daylight hides much, in appearing to conceal nothing from us, for it is possible to look at things so closely as not to see what they really are. We catch the mean detail; we miss the grand, comprehensive outline. We must stand farther off so that we may see the whole. 'When the great Athanasius lived on earth,' says Pascal, 'he did not appear in the light in which we now regard him; he was only a man called Athanasius.' Yet was the great Athanasius *the true Athanasius*. And even thus greatness ever stands among us, as

‘one whom we know not;’ know not, even because we think we know it so well.

And as of individuals, so of ages. It seems hard to be generous, not easy even to be just to the times upon which our lot is cast. The very expression ‘our present day,’ conveys with it somewhat of disparagement, implying a contrast with other ages in whose very silence we find an eloquence rebuking the clamour that surrounds us. Yet much that we now look upon as prosaic, and perhaps decry as unreal, if read as history would enchain our imaginations; if spoken as prophecy would stir our very souls. Future chroniclers will make it their wisdom to decipher the Runes we are now dinting, and will understand their import better than we who leave them on the rock.

Ours is a sober enthusiasm, patient because it is so strong. A Work is set before the day we live in, a Necessity is laid upon it; it sees and accepts its calling, content to labour in the thick smoke, and weary itself among the very fires of speculation. Let but our age apprehend a cause, or an idea, as worthy of its devotion, and it will not fail to be

furnished with apostles, with confessors, yes, if need be, with martyrs ; so strong is the passion of its onward march, so steadfast the ardour of its perseverance. And thus in how many a fair and still extending region of human thought and labour we have already arrived

‘ At the winning and the holding of a prize,
The hope of which would have been once deemed
madness.’

But with our spiritual and moral conquests it has surely fared less brightly ; here, among many leaders, we have as yet no Columbus, ‘ the naked pilot, promiser of kingdoms,’ bestowing more than he had promised ; no prophets, such as science has been blessed with, who have lived to see the wonder of their dream surpassed by its sober interpretation. Yet ours is none the less an age of generous experiments, of failures more noble than the successes to which the world decrees a Triumph. How many labourers are now among us, literally watering God’s garden with their foot ! — a holy and blessed work : but one in which we must not forget that the country in which our work lies is *a land rich in itself*, full of fountains

and depths springing out of its own hills and valleys, 'a land that drinketh water of the rain of heaven.' You say to me in one of your letters, 'We hear so much around us of doings, so much of Christian exertion and charitable endeavour, that in witnessing the comparatively small result of much devoted labour, I have been led to believe that we work too much upon the surface. The waters of life lie below it, and few pierce deep enough to unlock them for themselves or others. Our endless external reforms are, after all, only channels, too often dry ones, while every believer in whom his Lord's promise has been fulfilled, "I will be to him a well of water springing up into everlasting life," is a fountain, hidden it may be to the eye, but discernible in the greenness and moisture that surround it.'

We have more than enough of systems, of machinery, which, whether more or less perfect, will not go of itself. We may have done all that of ourselves we can do, and the moving spring may yet be wanting.¹ '*The spirit of the living creature is in the wheels.*'

¹ Ezekiel i. 19, 20 ; x. 16, 17.

And just where our national dread of enthusiasm is the strongest, we have surely many enthusiasts among us, soldiers who go upon a spiritual warfare at their own cost, and builders who expect with such materials as earth can furnish to reach even unto heaven. Yet God is a spirit, and Man is also a spirit, and all work that is done between God and Man must be done in the spirit—must be wrought from the centre outwards. The life that lies at the circumference of its guiding idea lies there but in faint outline, feebly drawn, like the outermost ripple on disturbed waters. We are anxious to *spread* the knowledge of God. This is *our work*, the end to which Christian exertion is chiefly directed, but before we can pursue it to any true result, God must also work a work within us, upon the deepening of which the extension of Christ's kingdom naturally, inevitably follows. For they who are rooted in the Lord will in Him bud and blossom, and fill the face of the earth with fruit. All who have ever been strong for God, have been strong *in Him*, and have known too, as Samson did, where the secret of their strength lay—in a dependence out of which they would have

been consciously weak, and as other men. The Church has always borne witness to this truth; her every prayer and confession proves that she has seen how it is that which binds her to her Lord, that strengthens her in Him, so that the chains which are about her neck have become 'an ornament of grace upon her head.' But here, too, she may take a lesson where her Lord has sent her to look for it.

Even from this generation. Full of faith and power in the resources of human energy, and in that faith and power working marvels, if it believed in God as firmly as it does in itself, the seed it would raise to serve Him would be of no degenerate stock, and the Church would once more, as in the days of its youth, take up its ancient hero-song, sweeter than was ever earthly Saga. *But are we as Christians equal to what we are as men?*

God has showed us earthly things, and we have believed. Man has taken his own measure and found it 'the measure of an angel.'¹ Human intelligence, once a bold guesser after unproven

¹ E. B. Browning.

truth, has learned the extent of its own resources ; hence its sure, yet extended aims, and hence its glorious acquisitions. Opinions with us are rooted and seeded things, able to raise up the life which they contain within them. We embrace facts, not abstractions ; *we live as men in the reality of that which we speculatively accept as true.* But can we say this for ourselves as Christians ? Have we believed when God has showed us heavenly things, or yet taken the measure of a man in Christ ? Are we as conversant with the Second Adam as with the First ; as familiar with the capabilities of the renewed spirit as with those of the living soul ? The facts of revelation are accepted. The gospel is made the basis of law and of society ; it is a framework holding all together ; a code, like the great Roman one, upon which the medieval world kept its hold so long after the power and spirit of the empire were but a tradition. . . .

But how few among us are of it upholden ! How few, fastening upon God through the awful relations it discloses, can say from the deep and ground of the heart, ‘O Lord, *by these* men live, and *in them* is the life of the spirit.’ And thus

a strange weariness overtakes us ;¹ uneasy in ourselves, we do not find rest in God, and become aware of a deep question, underlying all the shallow ones that now vex the current of religious speculation. We feel, each one of us for himself, that the point at issue is still concerning 'one Jesus,' whether we shall say with the world that He is dead, or with Paul steadfastly affirm Him to be alive, and still the resurrection of the spiritually dead, the life of them that believe. For human society is even now, as in the days when the gospel was first preached, made up of Greeks enthralled

¹ I leave these words as they were written. Yet, since then, even within the last few years, a change has come, far more gradually than is generally supposed, over the climate of the Christian world ; as if some mighty current, like the Gulf Stream, had set in, sending a warm breath across the universal Church, and breaking up the deadly ice of ages of unbelief and indifference. And though this change may be, and will be, accompanied with shocks and splittings, it is surely the prudent, not the *wise* Christian, who will on this account withdraw himself from its wide, soul-enlarging influence. For it is evident that this is not a work of extension only ; in every community, and in every heart where God has already had a work, that work has been lately deepened. 'The river of God is full of water.' He has not only sent rain upon the dwellings in the wilderness, but caused it to descend into furrows long since drawn. Experienced Christians are the natural guides and comforters of those whose hearts have been but lately made soft

by outward sense, of Jews resting in an outward law; and out of the midst of these a people has need to be yet more fully called, to find Him who is the end of the law to every one that believeth; 'Christ the power of God, and Christ the wisdom of God.'

Even now, said St. John, speaking of his own day, there are many Antichrists. Since then there have been many forms of denial, sundry kinds of spiritual death. Christ has long stood in this with the drops of heaven; in every Pentecostal outpouring there is something to recall the deep unconscious truth of that saying, 'These men are full of new wine;' and it is *their* part to see that the wine is not spilled, neither the bottles marred. And while it is easy to cavil at the phenomena connected more or less remotely with this change, the fact, *not to be affected by any of them*, remains, that a great moral and spiritual change is taking place at our very doors; that the poor among men are rejoicing in their Maker; that multitudes of people are at this very moment lifting up praying hearts, and this for no temporal blessing, no sectarian end, but simply for the clearer light of Christ's Cross, the fuller manifestation of His Presence. 'I will hear, saith the Lord; I will hear the heavens, *and they shall hear the earth*;' the heart of man seems set upon attaining to this closer correspondence with his Maker, set, too, upon obtaining it through the Man whom He hath sent. *They who seek the Lord shall praise him*. On all sides there is a sound of abundance of rain; so that the Christian feels that deep and many as may be the trials yet in store for the Church, it has turned over, perhaps for ever, one leaf of sorrowful experi-

world's judgment-hall, and suffered many things from them that throng it. From age to age false witnesses have risen up, laying to His charge things that He knew not. He has heard the defaming of the multitude, and borne in His bosom the

ence, *that of its long ploughing in the cold*, each labourer apart, and uncommunicating. The days of harvest are sultry and arduous, but the reapers work in bands, and are cheered by many a song :—

““ Brother, take thy brothers with thee,”

Speak the silver-winding brooklets

To the mighty mountain torrent ;

“Take us with thee to the ocean

That with outstretched arms awaits us

Oft, alas ! in vain awaits us.

For in sandy wastes we filter

Drop by drop, until the sunbeams

Drink our blood ; until some hillock

Locks us to a pool. Oh, take us,

Brother, with thee !” Then for answer

Swells the Flood, and on its bosom

Lifts its kindred, lifts and bears them

In its rolling triumph down.

Lands take Name, and cities Being

From its ceaseless march ; behind it

Tower and turret rise ; upon it

Float the goodly ships of cedar,

Fair, with many a flying pennon

Waving witness to its pride.

Bearing in its joyful tumult,

Bearing still its brothers with it,

These its treasures, these its children,

To the waiting Father's heart.'

rebukes of many peoples long gathered to the dust of silence. But the day of insolent derision is over, and it is after another manner that we behold Christ rejected, and set at nought by this generation. We are met, comparatively speaking, by little direct opposition to revealed religion ; its moral teaching is respected ; the sacred person of its Founder is held in reverence ; it is as a power that Christianity is denied.¹ Our age has nothing in common with the degrading scepticism of the past century, which cast its scorn up to God through the foul dishonouring of His image. We believe, as I have said, in Man ; and our

¹ The lightest leaf will show the way the wind is setting, and I know not where we are met by a plainer expression of this tacit, and in some degree respectful, denial than in the popular literature of our day. Here we see a systematic ignoring of Christianity, combined with a rather inconsistent exaltation of the benevolent aspect peculiarly belonging to it. We find in such writings many flowers to please us, but see that as in a child's garden they are stuck into the ground by their stalks only, *and have not grown where we now see them*. We know that even the lily floating on the waters, the orchid hanging in the air, keeps a tenacious yet unseen hold upon something beyond itself, without which its nourishment and life would fail ; and all this bloom and verdure is suggestive of a root, possessing, it may be, no beauty for which we should desire it, yet detached from which the leaf of humanity will wither and its flower fade.

noble and tender faith in Humanity is one which works by love, showing itself in persevering and arduous efforts after social amelioration. But here also we may find a fulfilment of our Lord's saying: 'I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; another will come in his own name, him shall ye receive.' The prophets who come in their own name, the apostles of human development, of social progress, find a willing hearing, but where is our recognition of a divinely appointed agency? where is our faith in that which hath appeared to man?

But because we believe in Man; because we reason, if not always aright, of truth, of beauty, of perfection, and are full of reverence, full of pity for the nature in which we find ourselves so fearfully and wonderfully fashioned; because our age, with all its wants and errors, is still a loving, a believing, an essentially *human* age, there shall yet come to pass concerning it the saying which is written: 'In that day shall a MAN be more precious than gold, than the golden wedge of Ophir.' The heart of this age is in its right place, and with that heart it may yet believe

unto righteousness, and escape the downward path towards which so many of its intellectual tendencies are dragging it. We have not yet drawn forth the true bitterness of the fruit whose mortal taste is already so plainly to be discerned among us, or many a yet noble and tender spirit would exclaim, 'Let not the pit shut her mouth upon me'—Materialism, the grave of all that is human, as well as of all that is heavenly, within man. The heart craves what the world would take from it; Man needs what no system invented by man has yet promised, far less given—a Comforter, an enlightening, guiding Spirit, wanting which he remains a mockery even to himself, the sport of circumstance, a Samson blind and fettered in the hall of the Philistines. '*The world knows but a Creator, spirits claim a Father.*' And oh! that we could see that He has already come forth to meet us; that we could, even in this our day, perceive the season of our heavenly visitation, and see to what its rejection tends—a moral atheism, blotting out God from the region of spiritual life, as surely as the denial of a Personal Cause excludes Him from the visible world.

‘There is a spirit in man’ faithful to its instincts even when astray as to their true object, it wanders often, yet feels through very sadness and weariness how far it has got from home. And hence come those utterances (of which you tell me), strange prophetic voices, a groaning and travail-pain of Humanity, which, even in the hearts of those who reject revelation, testify to its waiting for some great Redemption. If man refuses the bread which came down from heaven, never was it so hard for him to live ‘by bread alone’ as now. His very wealth and increase has brought with it a sense of poverty—*because* he has become rich, and increased in goods, he knows, as he did not before, that he is wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked. The energy of his wrestling with the things of time and sense has awakened instincts of which but for the ardour of that struggle he might have known little. He conquers kingdoms, and weeps like the ancient conqueror. The world which he has vanquished cannot satisfy him. He feels himself to be greater than the universe, yet feebler than the meanest thing within it which can follow the appointed

law of its being. The splendour of his material acquisitions is but a robe too short and thin to wrap him from cold and shame. He can *do* great things, but what *is* he? To have all, and to die saying, '*Is this all?*' is the epitaph of many a rich and wasted life. Every fresh region man breaks into, reveals new wonders, and with them new enigmas, calling upon him to solve them or perish. There is a special complication, a pressure in our present day, which is not to be answered by an unmeaning clamour against rational enlightenment. We cannot stay the current that is bearing us onward so swiftly, but we may guide our course upon it, looking to the stars above. 'Light is good,' good for its own sake, whatever it may show us. In an anxious and inquiring age, 'when men shall run to and fro, and knowledge be increased,' we are told that 'the wise shall understand.' They shall find their safety, not in placing faith and science in an unreal opposition, not in closing their eyes to the revelation of God's power, but in opening their hearts to the secrets of His wisdom 'double to that which is.'¹

¹ Job xi. 6.

And, now especially that thought and authority are at open issue upon many questions, may not some among us, ever ready to judge those who are without, lay to heart the solemn declaration of the Apostle, that judgment must begin at the house of God ! It is so easy to be orthodox in creed and statement ; so *safe* to rest in a merely traditionary belief, that many a decorous Christian fails to perceive the sure though invisible connexion between the lip-confession and self-denial of a merely outward profession, and the broader form of denial by which all such profession is derided. Yet between Christ mocked and Christ rejected there is but a step ;—who shall say how easily it is taken, or how quickly we may pass from the hollow homage, the ‘Hail, Master!’ which mocks our Lord, to the smiting and buffeting of open outrage ? When Christ is invested with but the show of sovereignty, the reed placed in His hands will be quickly taken, as by the soldiers, to smite His head. *This reed is nominal Christianity*, a strange slip of a degenerate vine, beneath whose blighting shadow a poison-growth of unbelief never fails to root itself.

And it is certain that this most mournful char-

acteristic of our age—the disposition to think slightly of Christianity,¹ to ask it what it has done or can do for the world—has been helped forward by a want on the part of the professing Church of whole-hearted faith in its *renewing, transforming* energies. Is it strange that the supernatural revelations of the gospel should be looked upon as foolishness by the world, while they remain—who shall say to how many among us—a stumblingblock, one that we dare not remove? but surely there are systems now in favour, temples made *with hands* into which we find it hard to fit the stone cut from the rock without hands. Human nature has been ever in love with a modified Christianity, slow to receive Divine truth simply, and as it is given. Hence the dressings and undressings to which Christianity

¹ When Jesus was taken before Herod, the king hoped, it is said, to have seen some great thing done by him, ‘and he questioned him in many words, and He answered him nothing.’ The attitude of our day is not that of an utter rejection of Christianity. Like Herod we appreciate and examine into it, questioning it *in many words* as to what it can do for the world, just as we put the same question to the schemes of science and philosophy. But to an age which, like Herod, is deficient in real faith in its Author, Christianity often answers—nothing.—J. E. B.

has been subjected. Roman Catholicism has accommodated it to human sense ; Rationalism accommodates it to human intelligence, or rather strives to do so, for are those who would make man the measure of all things sure that they have found man's true measure? If the doctrines of Revelation are mysterious, are the facts of Life less so? Are 'the things of a man' and the things of God *fitted*, so to speak, by the mere cutting off of all that transcends reason—itself but a part of man? Reason has its outposts from which it is continually driven back defeated ; its rules, but under a perpetual check ; it cannot take account of its own wealth, or fill the region it presides over. It is but a noble vassal, 'one that knoweth not what his lord doeth.' Man reverences his reason, and trusts it, as far as it will lead him, *but that is not his whole length*, for he feels that he, the reasonable Man, is something greater than it is. Sometimes his dreams are truer than its oracles, and this he knows. Therefore one deep calleth to another, and the answer to this call is Faith. Faith addresses itself to Man's whole being—it sounds every depth ; it touches every

spring; it calls back the soul from its weary search within itself, full of doubt and contradiction; it presents it with an object, implicit, absolute, greater than itself—‘One that knoweth all things.’ It provides for every affection, every want and aspiration. Faith stretches itself over humanity as the prophet stretched himself above the child—eye to eye, mouth to mouth, heart to heart; and to work a kindred miracle, to bring back life to the dead, by restoring the One to the One—*the whole nature of Man to the whole nature of God.*

Christianity, under its merely preceptive character, has done much for the world; received as a law, it has contributed greatly to social order and wellbeing; but thus received, it is, like the Law, too weak to accomplish for any individual soul the mighty change through which it becomes alive unto God. For this work is more than reformative; it asks for a renewing element—‘fire upon earth’—which none save One coming down from heaven can kindle. Our cold decaying Humanity must be fed by a fuller life than its own, must be nourished in a warmer bosom, before it can attain to any enduring heat of nobleness or love. If we look

through the long generations that have gone before us, we shall find that every nobler deed has been wrought, every fairer life lived, 'not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.' The sum of that great unwritten history lies folded in few words, '*all these lived in faith,*' in living faith in a living Person. Shall we look for those who have done great things for Christ or for the world among the philosophical admirers of Christianity, among its formal adherents?

Shall we find them even among those just persons to whose righteous hearts it is indeed a law and honourable, but not as yet the law in which is the spirit of life? Nay, rather among such as have sought and have received a Sign, the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and in this sign have fought and conquered. Among superstitious men, believing in many things, yet believing in Him; among ignorant men, knowing literally nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified, yet knowing Him upon no earthly testimony. Here too lies the quiet, perhaps unspoken secret of those lives of holy, unselfish beauty, in which

no communion has been more rich than our own—to all of these Christ has come, not by water only, but by blood.¹

The foolishness of God, that which man counts dark and incomprehensible, is stronger than man, *and nothing else is stronger*. Man loves his own ease, his own labours; there is a sweetness in the natural vine which he will not leave, even at the call to a kingdom, *except for a cause shown*. And hence comes the power of that mighty appeal, the attraction of which He who knew what was in Man prophesied when he said, ‘I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.’ When God, says Bunyan, would tune a soul, he most commonly begins at the lowest note; so has it been in the tuning of the world’s wide discord. In the depths of the great atonement, God has sounded the lowest note, and to this every life, lived during the last eighteen hundred years in harmony with Him, has been attuned. In heaven and upon earth there are

‘Two vast spacious things,
The which to measure it doth man behove,
Yet few there be that sound them,—Sin and Love.’

¹ Note F.

We know little of either until we learn of them at the Cross. There are abysses whose depths can only be guessed at by the weight of the plummet which is required to sound them. Such is sin; it remains as it has been from the beginning, a dark enigma, drawing thought, as through some terrible fascination, to fasten itself on the problem of its existence. Here reason has transgressed its limits, and faith outrun her heavenly guidance. Wise men, in their despair of accounting for the origin of evil, have been driven to deny its existence in theories too thin to cheat any heart that has been pierced yet enlightened by its sharp reality, and pious men falling into the snare which Job's integrity declined, have 'spoken lies for God, and argued deceitfully for him.' Hence dreams like that of Optimism,¹ fictions, such as that of evil being but the privation of Good;—names matter little; sin desolates as widely, pain racks as keenly, whether we account for their existence upon a positive or a negative theory.

¹ It is scarcely necessary to observe that the Christian optimism is as unsatisfactory as the philosophic, and must remain so, as long as there is no sight so common as that of unsanctified sorrow and unchastening pain.'

Yet it is remarkable that our Saviour, while He does not explain this awful problem, *does not explain it away*. To the old ever-recurring question, 'Whence these tares?' He answers simply, 'An enemy hath done this.' Man has striven to bridge over this chasm between his soul and God with theories contradictory to the reason they profess to satisfy, and false to the moral sense they desire to soothe, but He who spake as never man spake does not reason upon this subject. He sees this great gulf set; He knows what its mouth has devoured of earth's best and noblest; one thing most precious of all remains,—He flings Himself within it.

And though this gulf still yawns wide, and stretches itself even unto hell, though it still underlies Nature's fairest scenes, and earth's pomp and beauty and rejoicing descend into it daily, *the beginning of the end has been made*. Sin and pain and death continue their ravages, upheld by him from whom their strength is derived. The Beast lives, yet it has received a deadly wound; its dominion is taken away, though its life is prolonged for a season and a time.

Although the work of renovation is a hidden work, a slow one, 'for there are many adversaries;' though it proceeds as yet among checks and hindrances, as a fair city might rise from its ruins behind a broken and still beleaguered wall, yet the sure foundation has been laid. Deep and wide as decay has struck, the remedy has pierced still deeper. If we must come to the Cross to learn of sin, here too must we come to learn of love—a love of which we know but little until we see it in its crowning work. For our God is one that hideth Himself. Nature, yea also Providence, is thick with dark anomalies; day unto day these utter speech, and night unto night declare knowledge—a language of sign and parable, *where the voice is not heard*; One is there, only One, who has shown us plainly of the Father. God's bow lies upon the cloud of Circumstance, yet light does not break through it until we see it in the face of Him in whom the excellency of His glory shines. Human life is beset with contradictions, at the solution of which we are but guessers, until Christ solves the riddle that was too hard for us—bringing forth food and sweetness from the very jaws of the devouring lion.

‘If thou wouldst have me weep,’ said one of old, ‘thou must first weep thyself.’ *God has wept.* In the strong crying and tears of the Son, in the great drops of sweat as it were blood falling down to the ground, lie the witness to the travail of the Father’s soul. ‘Herein is love,’ consoling, rebuking love ; love that has no consolation so strong as the rebuke it administers. ‘Behold my hands and my feet !’ these testify to a necessity endured, an anguish shared. It is our brother’s blood that cries unto us from the ground ; ‘a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.’

I often think of George Herbert’s homely and affecting verse—

‘Death, thou wast once an uncouth, hideous thing ;

.

But since our Saviour’s death

Has put some blood into thy face,

Thou hast grown sure a thing to be desired

And full of grace.’

Our Saviour’s death has put blood also into the face of life. That which robs death of its sting robs life of its bitterness. When we once realise that the Son of God in taking humanity upon himself, *took something which He keeps still*, and

will not relinquish throughout eternity, we become alive to an awful consolation. We see Creation and its great High Priest standing as those whom God hath joined together, never to be sundered ; and through this living bond, 'even his flesh,' the anguish of the burden laid upon us, down to the groaning of mere animal existence, arises through a softening medium. An old Greek litany supplicates Christ by 'His known and unknown sufferings.' Who shall say how much the first were exceeded by the last, or fathom the depth of those words, 'He tasted death for every man'? Of the intensity of Christ's sufferings we know and can know little; *as little perhaps of their limits and duration.* What was the weight of the burden He took upon Him in being found as man, and is it altogether laid aside? Has He who was once acquainted with grief unlearned that lesson? Has the Man of sorrows in the persons of His afflicted members altogether ceased to grieve?

Was it only for those three-and-thirty years that the chastisement of our peace was laid upon Him? only upon the Cross that He bore the weight of that which He takes away, the sins of the whole

world? The Word on this subject contains utterances into whose depth of meaning only the Spirit can admit us. I allude to sayings like that of the Master, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' to declarations like that wherein the servant affirms his rejoicing in the sufferings which fill up that which is left behind of the afflictions of Christ.¹ These intimations are not dark, neither are they thinly scattered; they witness to a union more close and intimate than that through which Christ, *before* His coming in the flesh, redeemed and pitied His people, and carried them all the days of old.

¹ How are we to understand the words which tell us of Christ being crucified afresh, and put to open shame by our backslidings? of the Spirit grieved, interceding for us with unutterable groanings? Are such expressions to be received as merely figurative? Are we, as so many divines have taught us, to believe that God in using them is but accommodating himself to the weakness of our human conceptions, and allow ourselves to be cheated out of the assurance of a Divine sympathy, through the shallow glosses which have robbed so many Scriptures of their meaning? God's anger, as inward and outward desolation testify, is a real thing; so are his love and his pity real, real as the nature they spring from, the misery they meet, 'and his compassions fail not, his mercy endureth for ever.'

'Veritas est maxima caritas.'

The Reformers lay such an almost exclusive stress upon the work of Christ, that which He does *for* us, that an outside

Yet when we cease to hold to things by the heart, how little of them do we really retain! We let living facts stiffen into doctrinal abstractions, until Truth itself begins to wear a cold and fictitious aspect; it is not in fact true *for us* until we have made it our own through needing it, and loving it. It is not through a merely intellectual recognition that the human spirit can give its Amen to the Yea of God. We see how firm a hold the Church of the Early and Middle Ages kept upon this great truth, the actual presence of Christ with His people; how this belief revealed, and as it were transfigured itself in legends which superstition itself cannot rob of their undying significance. When St. Francis stoops down to kiss the leper's wound,

feeling has crept within the heart of Protestantism; we have light blazing on us from many windows, but we miss the warmth which *Catholicism*, even Roman Catholicism, has retained, because it recognises far more fully than we do the intimate personal communion ever existing between Christ and His Body of Elect. And in this, and not in any idea of meritorious works (a tree twice dead, plucked up from the very roots), lies the secret of their extraordinary sacrifices for Him; more particularly as shown in outward beneficence, and sympathy with the wants and woes of the human body—that body of our Humiliation which He who once condescended to its weakness, still bears upon Him in power.

and sees that his place has been taken by the Saviour; when St. Martin hears these words in his vision, 'Behold, Martin, who hath clothed *me* with his cloak,' we see that the Church to these men is not the mere tomb of Christ, but His warm and living body sending a pulsation through every member. There is now among us a disposition to separate the principles of Christianity from the facts upon which they are founded. We might as well attempt to separate the soul from the body without destroying the Man. For these, its supernatural facts, are the very life and breath and blood of Christianity; *its principles can only take root in a re-created humanity*. 'Give me a point,' said the mechanician, 'and I will remove the world.' When Man's soul is effectually moved, it is from a stand-point beyond itself. Experience shows us (as I have said) that Humanity has never been truly built up into God, but upon the foundation rejected of earthly builders, the mysteries of the Christian faith. Christianity is a building of which as much lies sunk beneath the surface as is reared above it. It is a tree whose roots strike down as deep into the earth as its

branches spread wide in the air above ; and when we seek to pluck up any one of those roots, a groan goes through its universal frame. We say of earthly things ‘that which comes from the heart goes to the heart,’ so it is with heavenly. When Man’s heart is touched, it is through that which comes straight from the heart of God. These mysteries, the life and death of God in the flesh, His spiritual resurrection in the reconciled soul of Man, are *messages* ; they are God’s authentic¹ love-letters, showing us plainly of the Father.

¹ Joseph Alleyne, in dying, would often commend the love of Christ, ‘often speaking of His sufferings and of His glory, *of His love-letters*, as he called the holy history of His life, death, resurrection, ascension, and His second coming, the thoughts of which would ever much delight him.’

And to say that the mystery of our Saviour’s passion lies at the heart of the whole of man’s life in Him is to say little, *for it is that heart itself* ; let love or sorrow pierce but a little deeper, and we shall find it even in our own. There is surely something very affecting in the fact that the sufferings of Christ should lie so much closer to the hearts of His people than all that those sufferings have won for them ; that it should be ever the anguish endured, and not the glory obtained, which touches all the finest, deepest chords of the renewed nature. I find a proof of this in the fact that dying believers soon to enter upon

‘Zion’s habitation,
Zion, David’s sure foundation,’

Those who were first in Christ lived very near the heart of these awful yet tender mysteries. We find them connecting every function of the soul's renewed life with what has been suffered and obtained for it through another life, 'of whose fullness we have all received.' It is scarcely possible to read the Epistles without feeling that Luther's often-quoted remark, 'There is much religion in the possessive pronouns,' may be fairly extended to prepositions, so threaded are the whole apostolic writings with these minute adhesive fibres—small members of our universal speech, yet boasting great things, as steps in the ladder by which the human spirit ascends even unto heaven.

By and *through* and *of* and *in* One 'of whom are all things, and we *in* him.' It is interesting to observe that while the saints of old appeal simply.

seem to care comparatively little for hymns descriptive of the joys and glories of heaven, beautiful as many of these are. It is to the cross, not to the crown, that the last look turns, the lingering grasp cleaves; and the latest conscious effort of the believer is sometimes to lift himself to Him who was lifted up, through the half instinctive repetition of some words like those of Gerhardt's Hymn on the Passion, the grandest of uninspired compositions—

'Oh head so full of bruises,
So full of scorn and pain.'

to God through His revealed attributes, His mercy, His faithfulness, His goodness which endureth for ever, it is upon God manifested in the flesh in the facts of our Lord's life, and *the relations which that life has established*, that the Apostles found their claim. They rest not so much upon what God is, as upon what He has become to men, their neighbour in Christ Jesus, and as such bound, as an old divine says, to love them even as himself.

‘What hath man done, that man may not undo,
Since God to man hath grown so near akin?
Did his foe slay him? he shall slay his foe;
Hath he lost all? he all again shall win;
Is sin his master? he shall master sin.’

And if here, as elsewhere, the congregations of the ungodly have robbed us; if in the confusion which reigns in the visible churches, it has become hard for believers to recognise the fact of their living membership with Christ and with each other, let us seek more earnestly for the light¹ which makes these relations manifest. We shall not find it in the phosphorescence of any dead man's candle; exhalations from the tombs, though

¹ 1 John i. 7.

they be the tombs of saint and martyr, give but an uncertain glimmer. For it is not galvanic but organic life we need, and this is not to be obtained by descending into the Past to touch the ashes even of a prophet's bones. They who stand by the grave, even of Christ himself, may behold with the devout women a Vision of Angels, *but Him they see not*. 'He is not here, he is risen. Behold, he goeth before you into Galilee.'

'Man's soul has widened with his world.' It is evident that prescriptive authority must have now less weight with him than in ruder, less thoughtful ages. *A child believes things because he is told them, a man believes them because they are true*. To the human spirit is now that word spoken, 'He is of age, ask himself.'

And it is plain that there was never in this world's history a time in which, to speak after a human manner, it was *so easy to miss Christ, so hard to do without Him* as now. For it is not only the outward courts that have become wide, yet crowded; science continues to open up infinite yet densely peopled spaces, lengthening out, although every link be golden, the chain between

man's soul and God, so that even the Christian thinker must respond with sadness to the bold and satirical saying of Hazlitt, 'In the days of Jacob there was a ladder between heaven and earth, but now the *heavens have gone farther off*, and are become astronomical.' The very revelation of God's power has tended to weaken the sense of His immediate presence ; yet it is not *here*, but in another region still richer, fairer, and more perilous that our peculiar danger lies. Man, within the limits of his own nature, has broken into a world of which former ages, and these the most intellectually subtle and refined, knew nothing. The time is past when all things within that nature could be mapped out in broad and even lines ; how many motives and impulses do we find at work within us of which we cannot say that they are good or evil, only that they are natural, *human*. Therefore is there a difficulty, oftentimes an agony, introduced into the Christian life, of which earlier ages were unconscious ; partly because the forms of good and evil were then more definite, and partly because what Goethe says of the individual holds true for the race he belongs to ; the easy-

hearted, even reckless simplicity of youth carries it unawares past many a danger where to pause and to investigate would be to be lost. For there are voices that even to hear is bewilderment; shapes, that but to look upon is madness. Our path is beset with such, alluring, beckoning, inviting us we know not whither; must we parley, must we wrestle with each of these to compel it to utter a clear message, to assume a certain likeness? The way is long, the day is short—we must onwards though the leaves above our head mutter, though the flowers that we would pluck are characterized, though each simple and familiar thing beside our way has become instinct with a terrible consciousness, linking it with our own being. Literature and art, even nature herself, these which for freer spirits had a charm of their own; and needed not any other, now breathe and burn in the fulness of a parasitical life; the fever of Man's conflict has passed across them; their bloom and fragrance feeds and is fed by fire kindled far down at the central heart. The shadow of Humanity falls wide, darkening the world's playground; and games, be they those

of Hero and Demi-god, can no more enthrall us. What is Science itself but a gigantic toy, which may delight but can never satisfy the heart, which even through its sadness and perplexity has learnt that it is greater than all that surrounds it? which confesses that though the light within it is too often darkness, still is that very light 'more worthy than the things which are shown by it;' still are Man's errors greater than Nature's order, his miseries nobler than her splendour; still is he

'Chief

Of things God's hand hath fashioned, sorest curst,
Yet holding still the First-Born's birthright, first
In grandeur and in grief.'

To know more of ourselves, and to know meanwhile no more of God, makes our present anguish and desolation. But what if even here were our safety? What if it were through this very wound that the good Samaritan as he journeys designs to pour in the wine and oil of his consolation? What if, in learning¹ more of the awful and tender mystery of our own nature, we become acquainted with the yet more awful, more tender mystery that en-

¹ Note G.

compasses it? Never did the heart assert itself so strongly as now ; highly strung and sensitive, it finds inward contradiction and outward circumstance bear hard upon it ; yet, beset by a thousand warring impulses, it has learnt its own weakness and its own strength, and out of the pressure and straitness of this siege it can take up its appeal to Christ out of the depths and into the depths of a common Nature. It can say with the blind man, ‘Jesus, *thou Son of David*, have mercy upon me.’ It has had its own voice thrown back upon it from the rocks ; it has seen its own form transfigured upon the mountains ; it has had enough of echoes, of illusions ; it seeks communion, reciprocity ; it needs that which can alone understand, alone *answer* it ; therefore the one flies to the one—the heart to Christ.

And let the heart of man be comforted ; it cannot outgrow its Christ ; yes, let the heart be comforted in Him out of its poverty and its riches alike. When we remember that Christ in taking unto himself Man’s nature *took upon Him all that it would become*, in how glorious and serene a light do the acquisitions of science stand ! This thought

gives, as it were, music and measure to the onward march of humanity; changes it from an outbreak of tumultuous forces to steady and disciplined progress. And if, turning from the world of action, we flash the light of this truth within the dim and many-chambered region that lies beneath it all; here also we shall discover that in Christ there is a provision, though we may not at once find it, for the growth and expansion which has made Humanity without Him like a fruit too heavy for the stalk it hangs on, dragged and trailed to dust by its very weight and splendour. Even through the wealth and apparent waste of tendrils and suckers it is now putting forth, it may cleave closer, drink deeper, unto Him. For all that awakens a sense of need within us, draws us by so much nearer Christ; no spiritual truth being our own until we have needed it, as long as we can do without these Divine friends they stand in some degree aloof from us—feeble, wounded, even despairing, we must cast ourselves upon their very bosoms before they will receive or return our clasp.

And let us not be discouraged because the life

in Christ has grown less simple than it once was. In earlier ages, even in times not very far removed from our own, the Christian's course was 'as straight as a rule could make it,' because the licence which surrounded him compelled him to cast aside all things so as to secure the one thing alone needful ; to use a simile of your own, he was like a swimmer casting off his garments, a hard-pressed rider throwing aside his weapons—to breast the wave, to win the goal was all in all.

When the pressure upon faith comes chiefly from without, this very pressure forces up the life in a direct, unswerving line like that of the palm-tree, lifting up its golden abundant crown to heaven ; the same life would now resemble that of a banyan, touching earth at many points, but at every one drawing forth fresh life and vigour ; less commanding in austere majesty, but more resembling the tree of prophetic vision, 'a harbour for fowl of every wing.' We must open our minds to this great fact, that all existence is organic ; we cannot be, so to speak, one thing mentally and socially and another thing Christianly, as if the life in Christ and the life in Adam flowed on to-

gether yet distinct, like two unmingling currents. The rational man will see Christ, as he sees all things, from the level upon which he, the rational man, stands. Man cannot see Christ at all except by light from above ; on the hill, as in the valley, we are in darkness until the dawn breaks ; but if sunrise finds us upon the mountain-peak, is it not evident that the prospect its light discloses must be infinitely wider and more glorious than if it had overtaken us many degrees lower down ?

Now that the whole table-land of existence is lifted into a higher region, we must discard such commonplaces as this, that there is no belief like that of the peasant and the child, and with them the dark and confused notions of Faith upon which all such axioms are founded. Faith is not an extrinsic outgrowth of the mind, opposed as such to its rational convictions, its clear and intimate intuitions. It is reason enlightened by its Lord and Giver ; it is feeling reconciled with its great object ; it is in an emphatic sense '*the right opinion of that which is.*' As Christ is a living Person, so is Truth a living thing, that cannot be nailed like some foreign substance to the

mind, but must permeate it, as like draws near to like. Until we see clearly that there is a harmony between that which we receive and that which we are; until we admit that Divine, like human influences, can only do their work upon the soul *through finding a point of contact within it*, we are scarcely so alive to the deep moral significance¹ of life as to see how it is through that which we believe, approve, yes, even through that which we *like*, that the soul is prepared to receive the impress of Caesar or of God. 'He that is of the truth heareth my voice.' This is a deep saying; so also is that of the prophetic psalm which declares plainly that our Lord reveals him-

¹ A significance which runs through it all. Every book, for instance, has a moral expression, though, as in the human face, it may not be easy to say what it consists in. We may take up some exquisite poem or story, with no directly religious bearing, *and feel that it is religious*,¹ because it strikes a chord so deep in human nature that we feel it is only the Divine nature, 'God who encompasses us,' that can respond to what it calls forth.

From some books, especially such as treat of sin with levity, an odour of death escapes; about others there is an almost sensible savour of life unto life. Some quaint old English poems and devout essays send a fragrance into the very soul; to look into them is to open the tomb of a saint, and to find it full of roses.

self under aspects varying with the moral and spiritual conditions of those who look upon him: 'With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful; with the upright man thou wilt show thyself upright; with the pure thou wilt show thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt show thyself froward.'

If spiritual truths were things self-evident, like mathematical propositions, compelling the assent of the mind they are addressed to, it would be hard to understand the extraordinary value which, under the Gospel dispensation, is attached to Faith. It would be hard to see how the possession of this one blessed attribute could embalm as it were a man's whole soul and life; how a human being could become dear to his Maker, simply because he saw that which those around him were not sufficiently enlightened to perceive. But is it not evident that this gracious disposition is one in which the whole man is included? Is there not something in the very nature of spiritual Truth which demands for its reception more than the mere intellect, let it strive as it will, can compass, and something, too, in our own nature which

makes us, as responsible beings, *answerable* for what, as regards this Divine truth, we see and hear? To put this in other words. Can a spiritual truth be apprehended otherwise than *sacramentally*? In all cases there will surely be a proportion between the soul's receptivity and the fulness that is poured within it; *a measure between what it brings and what it finds*. And this St. Paul intimates, when he desires for his Ephesian converts that they may be so rooted and grounded in love, *as to be able* to know that which passeth knowledge; to enter into that which he in vain attempts to shadow forth beneath the figures of length, and breadth, and height, and depth—the love of Christ—Love's secret, which only love itself can make intelligible. 'The love of God,' saith one of old, 'passeth all things for illumination.' One drop of this love shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost; one expansion of the renewed mind in pity, in forgiveness, in love to the Father, in goodwill towards men, will teach us *more of what God really is* than we could learn from a thousand disquisitions upon the Divine character and attributes. And that

which is the fulfilling of the law is also, in a great degree, the understanding of that which it fulfils : for love has an access, an intuition of its own ; it attains the end while others are disputing about the means ; it needs not to have every word explained, defined, interpreted ; it is enough for it *to know the voice*—the voice of the Beloved, to follow whithersoever that voice leads.

And the voice *of a stranger* the heart will not follow, even though it be the voice of Christ Himself ; therefore would it see more, know more, have more of Him, faith's sole sufficing Object, without whom love in this world would be too sorrowful, and hope too vague a thing. It is interesting to observe how the practical spirit of our day asserts itself in this great demand, already audible to ears that listen to the under-swell that rises faint, yet clearly, above the agitating tumult of opinion. We need the living, spiritual Christ ; and ours are not the needs which can be satisfied by gazing on His lifeless body, however curiously embalmed by formalism with rite and ceremony, neither will we allow mysticism to come by night to steal away His body, and fill its place with ideas

and imaginations of its own. For that great demand, 'a philosophy of fruit,' has been moved from the kingdom of nature to that of grace; here too we ask for a vintage, and desire to pass from speculation to that intimacy with its occupying subject which alone deserves the name of knowledge.¹ Is there not among us, even amid the very heat and dust of contending opinion, a manifest weariness of discussion? And this from no indifference to dogmatic truth, *the sure, the only foundation, for all that we can know or can receive of Christ*, but grounded upon the deep, ever-increasing conviction that even Truth itself, according to Locke's fine saying, will not profit us so long as she is but held in the hand, and taken upon trust from other men's minds, not wooed, and won, and wedded by our own.

And here it is that, as regards many questions now at issue, the plain matter-of-fact thinker and the ardent, inquiring Christian find a common

¹ 'There is only one kind of knowledge which can justly be called wisdom—*sapientia*; meaning properly *a knowledge partaking of the nature of a taste*; an *intelligere* in which there is at the same time a *sapere* which appropriates and takes in its object with a lively relish.'—ULLMANN.

standing-ground. The first will often ask of those who, whether for scriptural truth or for apostolic discipline, call upon him to come and behold their zeal for the Lord, 'Where, among so many notions about the thing, is the thing itself? Has the fire gone out, or is it still smouldering beneath the fagots that have been brought to mend it? The other with a deeper meaning will inquire 'What is the difference between placing our confidence in something which we do, or placing it in something which we think? We may as well rest in an ordinance as in an opinion, so long as we rest in either *for its own sake*, and not for the sake of that which the confession encloses, the form embodies,—even the Spirit, which, not to be contained in these yet working through them all, converts them into things having life.' And thus we have begun to tire of watchwords, to suspect that there is no necessary antagonism between the word which God has spoken, and the sign which He has ordained. The Word itself has been made flesh, and has dwelt among us: will objective truth be less valued, catholic institutions less loved, when each is held dear for the sake of that

which it conveys?—even that inward and spiritual grace, the gift obtained by our Lord for us men, the breath, the soul of spiritual life, a soul which we shall not surely expect to possess more simply through possessing less of its body. For it is not by rejecting what is formal, but by interpreting it, that we advance in true spirituality; the Spirit of God, even as the spirit of a man, works, and as far as we yet understand the conditions of our being, *lives* only through ‘the body which has been prepared for it.’ By things which we can see and hear, by things which our hands can handle, by words and forms, by doctrines and institutions, men live, and *in* them is the life of man. For it is neither by that which is merely natural, nor by that which is purely spiritual, that man’s complex nature is nourished and sustained; he lives neither by bread alone, nor yet upon angel’s food, but upon that in which the properties of each are included, ‘the bread which came down from heaven to give life unto the world.’

With regard to many of the truths of Christ, we are surely learning to be no more children, ever looking at things ‘in part,’ but men, able to

appreciate them as they bear upon each other, and upon the facts with which life brings them into relation. And that peculiar condition of our being which makes it hard for us to be altogether 'without partiality,' which renders it certain that there will be to each believer some one aspect under which his Lord is, above all others, dear, some ordinance in which He is above all others present, may, on the whole, help forward the perfect apprehension of Christ. Each individual soul, from the very constitution of our nature, will fasten upon that portion of Divine Truth which meets and answers to its own peculiar need; and when we learn to look at Christianity as a living, organic whole, *made for man, and corresponding with what he is*, we shall the better understand that deep saying of the apostle's, 'There are differences of administrations, but the same Lord;' and understand also how it is that Christianity assumes a distinctive¹ character in certain ages, among certain races, even in certain individuals. Christ does not so unite Himself to Humanity as to obliterate its native characteristics. Personality

¹ Note H.

is a sacred thing, being the very stamp and print of God upon each human soul: I would say also, it is an awful thing, being that which, whatever else we may gain or lose, we keep through time and through eternity, through it *knowing and being known*. And sacred also is that characteristic impress which, whether in religious or national society, gives life and individual expression to the community that bears it. 'Common sense,' 'public spirit,' are these mere words? words truly, but testifying, used or misused as they may be, to the fact of our being, in Adam and in Christ, members one of another, enjoying not only a separate but a corporate existence, the functions of which can only be exerted through fellowship and union.

'Have we not one Father? hath not one God created us? and did *He not make ONE?*'¹ All civil, as well as all Christian society, is based upon this confession, yet with this difference, that the social is the outward, and in some degree conventional, recognition of Brotherhood; the Christian, its hearty, inward acceptance, without which the

¹ Mal. ii. 10, 15.

distinctive mark of savage or animal life will reassert itself in the very bosom of civilisation. Selfishness or *selfism* (as it stands in its old form), tends continually to separation, — solitariness. Nature, it is true, tells us that we cannot do without each other if we would advance or prosper; she bids us *use* each other, Christ bids us *love* each other, ‘even as He hath loved us,’ with no single, no self-centred aim. He alone setteth the solitary *in families*, by giving in His own Person that common centre for hopes, interests, and affections, which is the principle of family, united life. Nature draws men together, but even in this drawing there is a disuniting principle at work; in social life, for instance, so admirable in its ideal outline, we find practically, something in ourselves and in others which makes it hard, even impossible to fulfil the obligations that we see most clearly. We find ourselves in the midst of contending wills, of confused, sometimes contradictory relations—a strain is laid upon Humanity which, weak through a civil discord, it is not strong enough to bear unaided.

‘In Adam all dies;’ the flaw runs through to

the foundations, the sword reaches even to the life. 'The earth,' saith Christ, 'is weak, and all the inhabitants thereof; *I* bear up the pillars of it.' Nature and humanity fail; their great charter is written in fading characters, distinct, it is true, in outline, but not clearly legible till held to the warmth of a heaven-kindled flame. In nature, even as in Christ, no man liveth, no man dieth to himself; and of this human society—even under its most limited conditions—makes us aware, by showing the action and reaction ever at work between the individual and the community he belongs to. We see that a man *really* becomes better or worse morally, advances or retrogrades socially, according to the standard of life which prevails around him—a standard which he himself is at the same time helping to depress or raise. This is a truth which we meet by the wayside, and as often pass without heeding it. Yet once in the course of this world, in the history of a Man who lived, who died for the people, who had no personal interests (as we are accustomed to conceive of them), *and whose life, on any materialistic theory, would have been an*

impossibility, this truth has been taken up upon the Mount, and there so transfigured and glorified, that men who toil and struggle below, seeing it in its beauty, 'running to it, salute it.' In the life and in the teaching of Christ, a clear ideal has dawned upon men, and we must not be discouraged though we should find it, *like all other ideals*, hard to be realised in this present life.

The pang of all true spirits in political, in social, in Christian life alike, is this, to see clearly what we cannot as yet embrace wholly. Nor must we despair if this pang should grow keener with increasing light :

'As the day lengthens, the cold strengthens.'

Two principles are at work within Christianity ; twin-existent, of which as yet travailing and in haste to be delivered, she crieth out—the desire for unity, and the passionate love for truth. These desires, under the present limitations of human nature, are antagonistic, and have often, in darker ages, torn the bosom at which they were fed. Yet they are no less of Christ, bringing according to His prophecy, a Sword into the world. We see in the Gentile world no desire for unity—

a desire ever founded on the love, either in earnest or in possession, of some fixed indisputable truth. And of this they had so little conception that Pilate's question, 'What is truth?' expresses, as it were, the sense of the ancient world. He did not wait for an answer, because he did not believe there was any to be found; all things being true for those who held them to be so. We see how sociable, to use their own expression, the old religions were in this; how ready to adopt and engraft any new idea or form of belief which seemed good for use, or even for ornament in social life. We see too, how opposed to this plastic genius of the old world is that, the arrow of the Christian Church, which has rankled so sorely in past ages, and even now diffuses a bitterness, which, however, if rightly probed, discloses less the bitterness of hatred than that of love—of love, chilled and mortified, desiring to knit up the ancient bond, yet repelled even while it is attracted, because the iron and the clay are so mixed together, that only the heat of charity at its whitest glow can weld them into one. The bosom of Christ is the grave, the only grave of

religious acrimony ; we learn secrets there which render it possible for us to be of one heart, if we may not yet be of one mind with all who lean upon it with us. For, slightly as we may think to heal long-festering hurts, there is no cure¹ for religious dissension except that of spiritual acquaintance with God, as revealed to us in the mind and spirit of Christ Jesus. To 'acquaint ourselves' *thus* with God is 'to be at peace,' for it is to learn how far more strong than all which separates, is that which unites us in Him. So long as the external is more to us than the vital, the accidental dearer than the essential, so long, in short, as we are more Churchmen, more Protestants, more *anything* than Christians, religious acerbity will continue. It ceases so soon as the pure language becomes more familiar to our lips than the dialects in which we are apt to merge it, and they who are in Christ, *hearing each other speak plainly*, discover that they are one in Him, even as He is one with the Father.

¹ Of this the soul's good Physician makes us aware in His memorable answer to His disciples, Luke ix. 54, 55. Even in rebuking their uncharitable temper, He reveals to them its cause and remedy, 'Ye know not the Spirit of Whom ye are the children.'

‘Jerusalem is built as a city that is at unity with itself;’ that which moulds itself from within is free. Who that knows anything of what unity really is, how deep its root, how kindly and unconstrained its expansion, can be very solicitous for uniformity, the outward union of ‘*cold and neutral and inwardly divided minds*,’ the rigid, corpse-like symmetry of that which cannot of itself either live or go, but must be ever kept up by that by which it can be alone produced—the strong pressure of the compelling hand? Human spirits are only to be drawn together and held together by the living bond of having found something *in which they really do agree*. And though we may yet be far from the dawning of that day, known unto the Lord, when Opinion and Truth will be no more at variance, the ‘One Day¹ when there shall be One Lord and his Name One,’ we are, perhaps, not so far removed from a time when devout men, although they be of every nation under heaven, may hear each other speak of the wonderful works of God in their own tongue—the *tongue in which they were born*—a speech after

¹ See the conclusion of Zechariah’s Prophecy.

which many among us have begun to yearn too fervently to be any longer occupied in framing shibboleths to prove our Brethren.

Is not a day coming—yea, unto them who watch for the Morning, has it not already dawned?—when we shall grow so covetous of good, of grace, as to turn our swords, too often sharpened against each other's bosoms, into ploughshares, to break up the fallow ground that lies within and around us? when we shall beat our spears into pruning-hooks to dress the abundant increase of the days when the sower shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed?

Already we are beginning to attach a spiritual meaning to the prophecy, 'Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim;' to look forward to a time when enmity *within* God's kingdom shall so far cease as to allow the kindred zeal of His people, zeal which is but love under its more ardent aspect, to be turned against the common enemies of their king, and to find *there* its triumphs. 'They shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines towards the west; they shall spoil them of the east together; they shall lay their

hand upon Edom and Moab, and the children of Ammon shall obey them.'

'In the evening time there shall be light.' Evening brings with it the thought of home and rest, the desire for communing round the hearth with those of our own family and household. Many steps are now surely,¹ though perhaps half instinctively, seeking the Father's house ; there is a sound of home-going feet, a murmur of anxious, loving recognition. The approach of night brings with it a sense of need and dependence, and in this,

¹ 'The second Pentecost preceding the coming of our Saviour promises to be of a very universal character. Blessed time ! I now read the Old Testament promises of a great blessing "on *all* flesh" as if I had never read them before ; they appear in a new light. Is not that prophecy of Zechariah striking, "And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of Hosts : *I will go also*. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord."

'Those beautiful, questioning words of Isaiah about the Gentiles often occur to me :—"Who are these who fly as doves to their windows?"—a flock of doves speeding to their home, their ark of refuge. Noah's one dove, like the solitary Jewish Church, took refuge there from the wild waste of waters ; but all kindreds, peoples, tongues, and nations shall fly to their stronghold in the latter times, their feathers of gold and their wings covered with silver, white and lovely, though they have lien among the pots.'—J.E.B.

the world's great evening, the heart has become more alive to the pulsation which is ever at work throughout the whole of Christ's Mystical Body, a secret perhaps not to be entered upon very early in the believer's day. For the characteristic of the religious or seeking soul, is solitariness. It is the withdrawal of the soul into the wilderness, there, in that deepened sense of personal accountability in which most religious convictions begin, to plead with God face to face, of individual sin, for individual redemption ; its cry is ' Lord, save *me*, for I perish.'

The characteristic of the godly, the accepted soul, so joined unto the Lord as to be of one spirit with Him, is fellowship ; in awaking up into Christ it awakes unto its brethren ; its exclamation is that of the Psalmist, ' Behold, there are *many* with me.'

And though the believer often seems like his Master to tread the wine-press alone, neither his conflicts nor his triumphs are ever really solitary. 'Multitudes, multitudes,' if unseen, are ever round him. Our Lord in His last solemn hour speaks of sanctifying Himself *for the sake of* those whom His Father had given Him, that they also might be

sanctified through the truth ; and though we may be unable as yet to pierce to the heart of all that is included in those words, '*Because I live, ye shall live also*,'¹ we know enough even now to be aware that heaven and earth are drawn so much the nearer each other for every soul in living communion with Christ. As every waste and barren spot becomes a centre for noisome exhalations to gather in, a haunt for doleful creatures to repair to, so for every piece of territory reclaimed unto God the whole garden of the Lord advances by so much nearer its final blossoming as the rose. And as our seasons grow milder and more healthful because a marsh has been drained or a forest cleared in some remote district, so will the blessing which faith draws down extend far beyond the age or region whence its voice arose. Our warfare with the sins and sorrows of our spirits may

¹ Our Lord says, 'I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly ;' life in its abundance, not in its mere continuity, which, at least to some spirits, would offer little to attract or satisfy. But what if we receive the saying in its *intensity*—'the fulness of life'—extended capacities, enlarged affections, with infinite wisdom and love to meet and answer them. 'My people shall be satisfied with my goodness, for I have satiated the weary soul, and replenished every sorrowful soul.'

be accomplished in some far-distant field, and they who have tarried at home may thus divide the spoil with the mighty. The lowly Christian lifting up holy hands to God, is at that moment strengthening those of some unseen brother; the ground upon which he kneels may continue dry as was the fleece of Gideon; the object upon which his heart's desire and prayer is set may fail, yet his labour has not therefore been in vain in the Lord. The blessing he has sought may drop far hence upon the dwellings in the wilderness, may help to bring down floods upon the dry ground which has not of itself craved after the increase from on high.

And knowing that neither the word which God sends forth, nor the holy impulse which that word quickens, can ever return to Him void, are we not justified in much hope, in long patience? You say to me, 'We ask for the continual dew of God's blessing; but need we, in days when the enemy breaketh in like a flood, despair of seeing floods descend upon a waiting world in answer to secret, persevering prayer?' 'I will pour floods upon the dry ground.' The ground is dry, yet it still con-

tains within it that Root which sprung of old 'out of a dry ground ;' a root which at the scent of water will bud and bring forth boughs like a plant. 'Revive, O Lord, thy work in the midst of the years !'

'Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south ; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.'

PART THIRD

‘ Therefore, behold, I will allure her,
And bring her into the wilderness,
And speak comfortably to her :

*And I will give her her vineyards from thence,
And the valley of Trouble for a door of Hope.’*

HOSEA ii. 14, 15



MY soul is athirst for God,' saith the Psalmist, 'even for the *living* God.'

There is a point beyond which neither the experience of others, nor even the utterances of the inspired Word can instruct or comfort the heart ; it must have rejoicing in itself and not in any other ; it must learn of its Lord as none save Himself can teach. Its prayer is, '*Make me to hear thy voice.*' It knows much about Jesus, *but it desires to know Him* ; it can no longer rest in opinions, in ordinances, in Christianity received as a system, in anything save in Christ, and in actual communion with Him.

But whence comes this sigh, the broken language of every Christian heart, 'more of Christ'? How is it that our Lord hath been so long time with us, and yet we have not known Him ?

Who among us has not experienced moments, and these perhaps often recurring, in which the heart has communed with itself and been sad, desiring that Jesus would Himself draw near, yet ready, in its discouragement, to ask whether, in the very urgency of its desire and its endeavour, it may not be exacting too much of itself, may not be expecting too much of God?

For have we, in this urgency, enough considered that saying of our Saviour's—'I have yet many things to say unto you, *but ye cannot bear them now.*' The natural man dies hard within us; the man from heaven is not born¹ without a pang; first the Anguish, then the Joy. Are our souls willing, yea, are they *able* to endure that anguish, ardently as we may desire the joy which makes it to be remembered no more? When the fulness of time is come, the fulness of strength will be given to meet it,—and not before; and, meanwhile, the way of life continues to have its own ache,² a sadness peculiar to itself.

¹ ' *We know not,*' says Bacon, speaking of natural life, ' *whether to be born may not be as painful as to die.*'

² Kein Reisen ist ohn Ungemach,
Das Lebensweg hat auch sein Ach.

A certain degree of impatience seems natural, even befitting to Man, a being of keen though limited vision, of stringent though narrow grasp. His mind, as one who has sounded its very depths has taught us, is naturally enamoured of order and system ; he finds within himself the Surmise of a perfection which outward nature does not respond to, and for this he the more delights to trace a sequence through all her apparent confusion ; to discover that by earth, and air, and ocean there is a *path* such as the vulture's eye hath not known. And if science, as has been truly said, mourns to find a gap, every here and there, in her great chain of cause and consequence—a link broken, perhaps dropt through for ever—how is it with the Christian, if in the ladder which joins earth to heaven, there should be some rounds wanting ? How is it when Man, who loves to track the end from the beginning, to see the flower wrapt up in the bud, finds that the life of the soul, like that of the insect, must pass through strange metamorphoses, through sundry successive kinds of deaths ? when he discovers that the life of the Divine seed, set so deep in the heart and in the world, instead

of being one of consistent growth, of free harmonious development, may be the most fitly illustrated by the well-known simile of an acorn set within a jar of porcelain ; a mighty plant that must shatter its frail earthen tabernacle in its growing.

And here we are reminded of what the prophet tells us, that God's thoughts are not our thoughts, neither His ways our ways. God has time for everything, and He has room for everything ; but it is far otherwise with His creature, and the tendency of all human effort is to go straight to a desired aim, putting on all possible strain and pressure. Thus adding what we conceive of infinite power *to what we know of finite will*, we have arrived at an idea of Omnipotence,¹ the exact opposite, surely, of that to which all *we see*

¹ An idea in which we lose sight of the fact that God, no less than man, has a nature, and within that nature laws by which He is irresistibly governed, and ends to which His designs infallibly tend ; and it is probable, indeed certain, that if we could see clearly into the depths of the Divine counsels, we should find nothing arbitrary or adventitious in any of the works or decrees of the Almighty ; nothing, I mean, which *could have been otherwise than that which it is*. Choice is the glory of humanity, its distinctive attribute ; raising a Man as high above the inferior creatures as it sinks

of the Almighty's works would lead. We accustom ourselves to speak of His dealings, whether in grace or nature, as being sudden, irresistible, one in design and in execution ; yet Nature, as soon as

him below Deity, for to choose is obviously as human as is to err ; infinite wisdom can see and take but one way.

God, as His Apostle tells us, *cannot* deny or contradict Himself ; and upon this, His moral obligation, the moral freedom of man is founded—a freedom which the gospel of light and immortality has brought to light, and which it alone reveals. All systems founded upon nature gender to bondage ; behind which of these, whether Pagan or Pantheistic, do we not see, or rather feel, the dark background of *power only* ; in other words, Fate, decreeing, creating, devouring all things—the blind, impassive womb and grave of rational and sensitive life ?

‘God is a spirit.’ What is Predestination, the Christian form of Fatalism, but this—the everlasting purpose of God *towards good*, which sin by its very nature contradicts, and naturally opposes, so that that which is exceeding good becomes the exceeding evil (‘anguish, tribulation, and wrath’) of those who resist it ? The ungodly, unless through repentance and faith in Christ, they fall back as it were, upon God’s plan, *must* perish with all that runs counter to it. Consider in this light the maledictory passages in the Psalms, and the awful denunciations of the Prophets against national sins ; they are declaratory, having to do with what is, as much as with what will be. The spirit instructed in God’s unchanging counsels (knowing His mind and purpose) reads the Present and Future by one light, and is able to interpret the one by the other. What *has* been (in this sense) *will* be, *must* be ; under certain conditions certain results follow.

ever we pierce below her broad surface-smile, betrays on every hand the marks of care, of patience, and adaptation. All that we learn of God in this region tends more and more to bring His works out of the domain of the *magical*, to convince us that it is the human and not the Divine energy which craves for its purposes the signet-stamp of full and speedy accomplishment ;

‘For we are hasty builders, incomplete ;
Our Master follows after, far more slow
And far more sure than we, for frost, and heat,
And winds that breathe, and waters in their flow
Work with Him silently.’

And turning to God’s inner kingdom ; here, too, where the good to be desired is so great, the evil to be avoided so imminent, even here also, we must confess that God wraps up His great designs in a husk or envelope, which will not fall from off them until the appointed time be come. What is the sacred history, from its very beginning, but that of a labour working to a mighty, far-seen, and remote end ? What is Christianity, though it has in its cradle contended with and crushed the serpent ?—even now but ‘an infant of days.’ We think, naturally, that God might

make all things as He wishes them to be at once, but we find that it is not His way to do so. God does not heal us with a touch. He uses means and processes, tedious often and peculiarly afflicting,—‘He giveth medicine’ for our mortal sickness; *a life-long remedy for a life-long ill*. And when we feel—as what Christian at times does not—an impatience with the slowness of our own growth, let us look from ourselves into the universal Church of Christ, and ask this self-answering question of our hearts, *How shall the growth of the part be rapid when that of the whole has been so slow?* Let us consider the nature of the Earlier Dispensation, and recollect under how many costly and cumbrous folds of rite and ceremony the treasure of the world lay hid. Let us remember that this is *still* a hid treasure; that to the outwardly Christian, no less than to the Heathen World, the great mystery of redeeming love remains that world’s Open Secret, *declared yet uncommunicated*, plain to the ear, yet dark to the sense. Let us consider the slow, the uneven, the painful advance of the Mystic Spouse; she that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon

the arm of her Beloved, and we shall see that she, like her Lord, is wounded in her heart, her hands, and her feet.

And that these things are so, the Christian must fain confess. Yet he would fain see them otherwise; would fain behold if it were but the initial fulfilment of those deep, instinctive prophecies which overcharge his heart—*a heart too large for the body through which it must for the present work*. Yet among many yet unfulfilled predictions, he must look upon one evermore fulfilling itself, and read in all that passes within him and around him a comment upon the Eldest-born of prophecy: ‘Thou shalt bruise his head, *and he shall bruise thy heel*.’ He must see evil following hard upon good, *following because of good*; Satan exalting himself against Christ; the Gates of Hell advancing upon that against which they shall never prevail. Therefore is he often in this life perplexed and baffled, as one that knoweth not what his Lord doeth. And it is this which gives such terrible, even blighting power to the words and writings of unbelievers, which barbs and sends home many a dull scoff that would other-

wise fall harmless ; that they touch a conscious, ever-rankling wound. *What they urge against Christianity is true.* The believer knows, already knows, all that the infidel can tell him ; the eye of love can see as clearly as that of hate, and it has already mourned over all that the other exults in ; has seen springs sink down suddenly among the sands of the desert ; has looked upon bare and stony channels, now ghastly with the wreck and drift of ages, yet showing where once a full, fair river bore down life and gladness to the ocean. The Christian would fain explain, account for these long delays, this partial efficacy, this intermittent working. He feels that he is in possession of the key which is to open all these intricacies, but at present he finds that, like that of the Pilgrims, 'it grinds hard in the lock.' He sees Jesus, but he sees not yet all things put under Him. The world around him is the same world which crucified his beloved Lord, and he must listen from age to age to its insulting cry, 'If thou be the Christ, come down from the Cross, and we will believe.'

There is something sorrowful, even perplexing

in every life which is guided by a standard which those around us do not recognise ; to be living by the dial when all around us go by the clock, brings a contradiction into the life of which the lives of those who are in league with circumstance, 'the slaves and the masters of every day,' know nothing.

There is a sadness in all Idealism ; it lifts the soul into a region where it cannot now dwell ; it must return to earth, and it is hard for it not to do so at the shock of a keen revulsion, the dashing of the foot against a stone. But in no life does the secret of all tragedy,¹ the conflict between the Will and circumstance, so unfold itself as in that of the Christian ; he, of all men, feels and mourns over that sharp, ever-recurring contrast of our existence—the glorious capabilities, the limited attainments of man's nature and destiny below. For *his* possibilities are at once more glorious and more assured than those of other men ; yet, as regards actualities, he among all men must be content to have the least to show.

¹ Interior freedom and exterior necessity, these are the two poles of the Tragic World.—F. SCHLEGEL.

And this, if we examine deeply, will be found at the root of all sincere fanaticism. It is the agony of the spirit, its strict, convulsive embrace of some glorious truth, the soul's first love,¹ for the sake of which it refuses to perceive the limitations to which all things here have been made subject. Having tasted of the fruit of the tree of life, 'good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and to be desired to make one wise,' it forgets that old unrepealed statute, that man, in the Second Adam as in the first, must till the ground from whence he was taken.² Until he returns to the earth he must turn to it, nourishing and being nourished by it; if he would stretch forth his hand and live by what he can reach of absolute truth, he will quickly come across the flaming sword turning *every way* to keep the way of the tree of Life.

'We trusted it had been He which should have redeemed Israel.' Under whatever form this hope encounters us, from the wild excesses of the Fifth Monarchy Men, and Munster Anabaptists, to the simple expectation of the Dorsetshire peasant, who in Monmouth's rebellion talked about 'King

¹ Note I.

² Genesis iii. 19, 23.

Jesus,' there is always something affecting in its expression; and the more so, because the foreseen sadness of its disappointment is one which connects itself with the natural experience of Christian life. How much is there in this to remind the believer of what the two chosen disciples must have felt when they descended from the Mount of Transfiguration! For he too has known moments, perhaps hours, on which the calm of eternity seemed already to rest—still, blessed seasons in which he has beheld not only Moses and Elias, but his own life also transfigured in his beloved Lord; *times in which things present were intelligible, things distant clear*. And he too has come down, like them, to meet the full shock of this life's perplexity, to be met by human anguish, the struggles of the demoniac, the tears of his father, to witness and perhaps share the discomfiture of his brethren, 'Why could not *we* cast him out?' to listen to their perverse disputings as to 'who among them should be greatest.' To whom shall he declare the glorious revelation? to whom shall he even speak¹ of

¹ 'All that I hold worthiest,' says David Scott, of the high

the things which he has seen and heard? Yea, even while he thinks upon the Vision, even before it has had time to fade, he may find by a sudden blank and stillness in his own spirit, that 'it has been received up again into heaven.'

'A little while!' said the disciples, 'what is this He saith? A little while!—we cannot understand what He saith.' *A little while, and ye shall not see me*—a hard saying to the loving, confiding heart, which would fain abide for ever where it

ideal objects to which his life was devoted, '*seems to remove me from the sphere of other men.*' A kindred sense of isolation must often overtake the Christian, and it is one which he must learn to meet with a prepared and patient heart. We must be content faithfully to speak out what we feel and know, without expecting that others will be proportionably affected. These things have been *shown* to us by God himself, worked by His Hand into the very frame and texture of the soul; can the mere *telling*, even though of truth itself, affect as sensibly?

Besides this, we must remember that it is not only spiritual things that appear 'foolishness' in the absence of enlightened receptivity. Young people, for instance, do not, *cannot* believe what the old tell them of life and its trials; and what mere jargon, to one uninitiated, appears the talk of two enthusiasts upon literature and art! It gives him a secret irritation; he is not only uninfluenced by their zeal, but scarcely believes that they themselves really feel what they express so strongly, knowing that the world to him goes on very well without this foreign element, and could dispense with it for ever.

has found it so good to be—a hard but inevitable saying. There is a severity in our Lord's inner discipline which reminds the believer of Joseph's making himself strange unto his brethren. For it is not the natural man only that has to be humbled and chastened by Him, the spiritual man also must become as a weaned child, and for him there is 'a secret, low fire' kept long burning. In Christ, as well as for Christ, they are to be counted happy who endure; who bear all things—silence, delay, aridity, for thus He trains His Athletes.

The spiritual life is a world within itself; with joys, with sorrows, I would say also with *temptations* peculiarly its own; and he has not advanced far within its borders who has not learnt the truth of that saying, 'I beheld, and lo! by the very gate of heaven was there a road to hell,' who has not prayed with holy Herbert for deliverance '*from the arrow that flieth by noonday.*' There is much even in the renewed mind which, if suffered to remain there, would gradually eat away the heart of its strength and purity; something in each believer, which he imagined he had left behind when he forsook all and gave himself up

to follow Christ, but he finds that it has rushed after him, like Care in the ancient proverb, and holds to him with as tight a grasp as ever.

How many tendencies, and these not to be numbered among such as are the least worthy, will seek, like Clovis and his Paladins, for a hollow, hasty baptism, that they may be called by Christ's name, and fight His battles, remaining just what they were at first! Therefore the believer, as he advances in self-knowledge, learns to bless and to adore those piercing yet enlightening experiences of his own weakness, which, as it were, let daylight within his whole spiritual being. He learns, even in exclaiming 'Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' to rejoice in those its deep-seated infirmities, against which he continually prays and strives — he finds many things within him, pitiable rather than sinful; hindrances from which he longs to free himself, yet learns even in these to recognise his true though humble friends and helpers; *him they compel to bear the cross*, and even in that compulsory bearing, his heart so grows to it, as to desire no independent strength or virtue. '*Blessed are ye poor.*'

Blessed are the souls in whom not the strength of nature only, but that of grace, has been so brought low even to the very dust, that they have learnt to call nothing that they have their own.

Often must the believer, like Antæus, grow stronger for having touched the ground; often must he experience the sentence of death *in himself*—must feel himself a Being without heart or hope, incapable and even insensible, so that he may learn to trust not in himself or in any other, but in Him who raises the spiritually dead. The Christian must hold on to God, through conflicts and agonies; he must fight while his blood runs down and glues his hand to his sword, so must he hold on, when that hand¹ is benumbed and stiff with cold; when strength and consciousness seem gone together, and only an instinct remains

¹ The fluctuations to which spiritual life is subject show the wisdom and goodness of God in making so much of it, to reside in duty, a *principle independent of the variations of feeling*. There are long seasons of banishment from God's presence, unconnected perhaps with any sense of His displeasure, in which the soul must say, 'Make me as one of thy hired servants,' and during which, even in the absence of sensible love and joy and fervour, it may be able to testify that '*Great is the peace of them that love thy law.*'

There are spaces and silences in the Christian life, times

through which the soul is able to fling itself like a dead weight upon Christ. Yet even here is

‘An overthrow
Worth many victories.’

Through being chilled and mortified in the smallest, most inwardly humiliating things; through being beaten away from the broken cisterns of self and of all creatures, we learn, as we could never without this have done, to look to Christ as our well of life, and so to find *all* our fresh springs in Him, as to be able to say with a simple and sincere heart, ‘Lord, give me evermore of *this water*, so that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.’

‘He that believeth shall not make haste.’ Blessed are they, Thou good Joseph, who love Thee even as Thou art; who trust Thee in spite of Thy silence and Thy strangeness, Thy long delays,

which it is impossible to describe, because ‘full desertness’ in souls as in countries ‘lieth bare,’—times when the soul seems devoid of the capacity, even of the desire for communion with its Lord, yet even during these its delight in His service may continue, because the excellency of His commandment has truly, however imperfectly, become its chief and chosen good. ‘*The poor*,’ saith our Master, ‘*ye have ever with you*, but *Me ye have not always*.’ A continual service of love, but a communion not as yet abiding.

Thy repeated questionings, Thy withdrawal into Thy secret chamber, Thy protracted tarrying there. 'Blessed is he who shall not be offended in Me.'

For Wisdom, even in this world, is justified of her children ; most so of all in Him, her chief, her only beloved Son, without whom was not anything made that was made, yet who rejoices in the *habitable* parts of the earth, and whose delights are with the sons of men. I know not how to speak of that great era in the Christian's soul, when, whether through the Strength of a patient following, or through the sweetness of a loving recognition, it *finds* Him whom it has long loved, and passes,¹ in that finding, from the straitened life within itself into the free outlook from self into Christ. When it ceases to confer with

¹ 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.' After long conscientious serving of God, refreshed by little feeling of joy or comfort, there are moments when the soul seems suddenly made aware of its own happiness—when, either through outward circumstances or without them, an appeal is borne in upon it as direct, as pleading, as distinct as that which was made of old to Peter, 'Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?' and it is able to answer out of its very depths, 'Lord, thou knowest.' Its love for its Lord being as surely felt, as little to be doubted as its own being, it answers as steadfastly as if asked whether a parent or child was loved—it

flesh and blood, to watch over its own changes and fluctuations, for the sake of attaching itself implicitly to Him who is the whole of what we have in part; when it lives no longer by faith¹ but by Christ, holding Him too surely to think of that it holds by,—it has done with self-questioning, with self-analysis; *it believes in the love by which it lives*, and can appeal for all answer to the fact of its own life.

And I know not what should more cheer and gladden a Christian than to see his spiritual life losing everything of an exotic character; to have it set in the open air, welcoming the wind from every quarter; acquiescing in all things *because depending only upon one*. A free and sustained

dares even to appeal to the omniscience of the heart-search-God—‘*Thou knowest.*’ Such moments are surely more to us than a passing comfort. Do they not teach us something of the depth of those words, ‘*We love him because He first loved us*’? For is not this also of the Lord—this tender attraction, this warmth, at which the frozen waters of the heart break up and flow forth as at the breath of spring? And does not this seeking of our love on Christ’s part convince us that He is ever loving us in our colder as well as more fervent seasons, and that in being drawn by His loving-kindness, we have laid hold on His everlasting love—a chain which runs backwards and forwards through all eternity?
—J.E.B.

¹ Note K.

spirit becomes habitual to him, who, in the breaking of his daily bread, has found that Real Presence which sanctifies and glorifies our life's poor Elements. When the heart has found its true gravitation, it leaves that Rest slowly and returns to it quickly ; disturbing influences will be felt from time to time, but their power is gone, '*that which is the strongest must win.*' A firm, assured patience grows upon the Christian, enabling him to hold upon his way, undeterred, unchilled by whatever he may meet upon it ; enabling him also, I know not to what inner music, to build up his spirit to a Strength of calm reliant conviction, even with the stones he finds there, as a brook lifts up a more clear and rapid voice for flowing over pebbles. Roughnesses and littlenesses, indifference and contradiction, for all of these the heart that has made room for Christ finds room, in a steadfast, not scornful allowance.

The strain upon the inner life has passed over from self to Christ, and with that strain the uneasy pressure which may once have tended to something of exaggeration and eccentricity. Time was when the believer was often fain, with the Gaul of

old, to decide a doubtful question by violence, to fling his sword within the wavering balance. He can now afford, like the practised archer in sending home his arrow, to allow for the set of the wind it flies through. His heart has grown wise, instructed, tolerant, tender with weakness, patient of imperfection :

‘ Who is blind as he that is perfect,
And blind as the Lord’s servant ? ’

How quiet such a life is ! how fruitful ! fruitful because it is so quiet ; it works not, but lives and grows. The uneasy effort has passed out of it ; *unresting because it rests always*, it has done with taskwork and anxiety ;¹ it serves, yet is not cumbered with much serving ; it has ceased from

‘¹ Too long have I, methought with tearful eye,
Pored o’er this tangled work of mine, and mused
Above each stitch awry, and thread confused.
Now will I think on what in years gone by,
I read of them that weave rare tapestry
At Royal looms, and how they constant use
To work on the rough side, and still peruse
The pictured pattern set above them high ;
So will I set my Copy high above,
And gaze, and gaze till on my spirit grows
Its gracious impress ; till some line of love
Transferred upon my canvas, faintly glows,
*Nor look too much on warp or woof, provide
He whom I work for sees their fairer side.*’

that sad complaint—‘*Thou* hast left me to serve *alone*.’

Such a life will seem less spiritual only because it has grown more natural ; the soul moves in an atmosphere which of itself brings it into contact with all great and enduring things, and it has only to draw in its breath to be filled and satisfied. I know not how to describe the grandeur and simplicity of the state that is no longer self-bounded, self-referring ; how great a thing to such a freed and rejoicing spirit the life in Christ Jesus seems ; a temple truly ‘not of this building,’ too great to be mapped out and measured ;¹ *too great to be perfect here*. A thought for which our mortal life—a language as yet too broken and confused to

‘Catch up the whole of love and utter it,’—
can find no corresponding word.²

Yet experience, even the deep assurance of our present imperfectibility, worketh Hope. Though the Church, like the moon, seldom reflects the

¹ Note L.

² De Quincey, speaking of the grandeur and subtilty of the human spirit, says most beautifully that all of our thoughts have not words corresponding to them ; many of them in

clear outline, never the full splendour of the light she shines by ; though the shadow of earth is too often cast between her orb and Him, she is still the 'faithful witness in heaven,' weakness girt about with power, the Woman clothed with the Sun, a Wonder in earth and in heaven. Though the believer is no plant grown up in his youth, fair and flourishing, without blight or mildew ; though he may be far indeed from sealing up the sum 'full of wisdom and perfect in beauty,' still, in spite of every warp and hindrance, *he has grown*, and his life has become to him but a prophecy of the life it keeps warm within it—

' Close compest
Our present holds our Future, like a Rose
That may not yet its perfect Soul uncloze,
Lest angry winds should scatter or molest.'

And as the Christian advances upon his way, a our yet imperfectly developed nature can never express themselves in acts, but must lie, *appreciable by God only*, like the silent melodies in a great musician's heart, never to roll forth from harp or organ.

In connexion with this idea, in how sublime a light does his Name—THE WORD—place our Saviour ! Jesus Christ is the Word of God, Him in whom the Father's thought has found full and perfect utterance. ' For I know the thoughts that I think concerning you,' saith the Lord, ' thoughts of peace and not of evil, *to give you an expected end.*'

sweet and solemn sense of the unity of life grows upon his spirit. 'We are complete in Him ;' much of our life, if viewed in itself only, would appear purposeless and broken, yet Christ has said, 'Gather up these fragments that remain, so that nothing be lost.' We learn to look at life as a whole thing ; not to be discouraged by this or that adverse circumstance, remembering how much there is and will be in that life which is, 'like frost and snow, *kindly to the root*, though hurtful to the flower,' fatal to the bloom and fragrance, the lovely and enjoyable part of our nature, but friendly to its true imperishable life. Looking at ourselves, we may see that under a slight, sometimes a very slight modification of inward bent, or outward circumstance, we should have been far more happy, more beloved, *apparently* more useful than now ; yet we may also see as plainly, as we confess it humbly, that we have attained, through all these losses, to that to which every gain is even present appreciable loss. And here I would gladly say something of those gracious outward providences through which God will sometimes *visibly* visit and refresh the spirit, turning over, perhaps for ever, a tear-stained page of contradiction, and

unfolding a fresh leaf of richer, happier experience :

‘ For not for ever will he continue thus to thresh it,
Nor to vex it with the wheel of his wain,
Nor to bruise it with the hoofs of his cattle.

· · · · ·
In just measure when thou inflictest the stroke, thou
wilt debate with her,
With due deliberation even in the rough tempest.’

Gradually, almost imperceptibly, the believer will find the current of his existence sweeping into a broader channel ; will find ‘ doors opening ’ upon him, doors of happiness, doors of usefulness, which will be to him a Gate of Heaven ; ‘ windows opening,’ letting in the breath of summer upon his soul, filling it with sunshine and sweet air ; suddenly too, in the deep emergencies of life, some new interest, some friend will appear like the Great Twin Brethren, or Saint of old, in the thick of the battle, vanishing perhaps when the fight is over, yet blessing him even in vanishing from his sight.

For, that terrible saying of Anne of Austria to Richelieu holds true for mercy as well as for judgment : ‘ My Lord Cardinal, God does not pay at the end of every week, but at the last *He pays.*’ God may put his faithful ones upon a long and

painful apprenticeship, during which they learn much and receive little—food only, and ‘that in a measure’—often the bread and water of affliction. Yet at the last *He pays*; pays them into their hearts, pays them into their hands also. We may remember long seasons of faint yet honest endeavour; the prayers of a soul yet without strength; the sacrifices of an imperfectly subdued will, bound even with cords to the altar; we may remember such times, or we may forget them, but their result is with us. Some of the good seed sown in tears is now shedding a heavenly fragrance within our lives, and some of it will blossom, perhaps bear fruit over our graves.¹

There are moments in the Christian life upon which the spoil of a long conflict seems heaped, in which it can rejoice even with the joy of a late yet

¹ ‘I have remarked,’ says Palissy, ‘trees and plants which felt their decay approaching, and which before death hastened to bring forth fruit and grain before the accustomed time—What if I spoke of men?’

We may compare what our Saviour says, ‘Except a corn of wheat die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit,’ with the fact that His brethren, who did not believe on Him during His life, were, after His death, in two known and other probable cases, His devoted followers and martyrs.

abounding harvest. Seasons, too, sometimes prolonged ones, which recall what the historians of the Middle Ages tell us of the Truce of God—set, appointed times when the land had rest, and war and violence were no more heard within its borders; so are there blessed intervals, wherein the soul reckons up many desolated Sabbaths, and enjoys a God-given, God-protected rest.

Light is good, and it is a pleasant thing to behold the sun. Yet far dearer than outward peace, far sweeter than inward consolation, is that, the ever-during stay, the solace of the Christian's heart, the imperishable Root of which all else that gladdens it is but the bloom and odour; the dry tree¹ that shall flourish when every green tree of delight and of desire fails. It is to the Cross that the heart must turn for that which will reconcile it to all conflicts, all privations; which will even enable it, *foreseeing them*, to exclaim, 'Yet more.' When Christ is lifted up within the believing soul, nothing is too hard for it to venture upon or to endure; it rests upon a power beyond itself, and can bring its whole strength to

¹ Ezek. xvii. 24.

bear upon generous, exalted enterprise. Show Thy servant *Thy work*, and his own will be indeed easy. Let this powerful attraction be once felt, the heart's, the world's great and final Overcoming, and all other bonds will weaken, all other spells decay. '*Midnight is past*,' sings the sailor on the Southern Ocean. '*Midnight is past ; the Cross begins to bend*.'

Outward duties weary, inward consolations fail. *Charity never faileth*. Let us now turn aside and look upon this great sight, of Love that burneth with fire, yet is not consumed ; of Love that having poured out its soul unto death, yet liveth, to see of that soul's long travail and to be satisfied with it. 'Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.' When were Love's arms stretched so wide as upon the Cross ? When did they embrace so much as when Thou, O Christ, didst gather within Thy bosom the spears and arrows of the mighty to open us a Lane for Freedom !

'Thou art gone up on high ; Thou hast led captivity captive : *Thou hast received gifts for men* ; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.'

NOTES.

NOTES

NOTE A.—P. 19.

‘O LORD, what a wonderful spirit was that which made St. Paul, in setting forth of himself against the vanity of Satan’s false apostles, hand in his claim here that he in Christ’s cause did excel and surpass them all? What wonderful spirit was that, I say, that made him to reckon up all his troubles and labours, his beatings, his whippings, his scourgings, his shipwrecks, his dangers and perils by water and by land, famine, hunger, nakedness and cold, with many more, and the daily care of all the congregations of Christ, among whom every man’s pain did pierce his heart, and every man’s grief was grievous unto him. *O Lord, is this Paul’s primacy, whereof he thought so much good that he did excel all others?* Is not this Paul’s saying unto Timothy his own scholar, and doth it not pertain to whosoever will be Christ’s true soldiers? Bear thou, saith he, affliction like a true soldier of Jesus Christ. This is true; if we die with Christ, we shall live with Him; if we suffer with Him, we shall reign with Him; if we deny Him, He shall deny us; if we be faithless, He remaineth faithful; He cannot deny Himself. This Paul would have known to everybody; *for there is no other way to heaven, but Christ and His way.*’—BISHOP RIDLEY’S *Farewell Letter to his Fellow-Prisoners, and those who were exiled for the Gospel of Christ.*

NOTE B.—P. 22.

‘KNOW you what our Saviour says to His dear Peter?
“*When thou wast young, thou didst gird thyself, and didst walk where thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and lead thee whither thou wouldst not*” (St John xxi. 18).

‘The young scholars in the love of God gird themselves; they choose their penance, resignation, devotion; they do their own will in doing the will of God. But the old masters in that love suffer themselves to be bound and girded by another; they go by ways which they would not choose according to their own inclinations; they stretch forth their hands, allowing themselves to be governed willingly against their will; they say that “*obedience is better than sacrifices*”; they glorify God, crucifying not only their flesh but their spirit.’—*St. Francis de Sales*.

NOTE C.—P. 25.

IN one of Vinet’s works on the Christian life are some excellent remarks on St. Paul’s words, ‘The feeble members are the more necessary.’ Their silent, unseen work, so humble in its mode of action that sometimes its value is first learnt through the sensible blank its withdrawal leaves, is lasting work, because it is real work, done and followed, if followed at all, ‘for the work’s sake.’ But it is evidently far otherwise when genius, learning, or extraordinary force of character, *things which have a powerful attraction in themselves*, are consecrated to the service of Christ. In spirits thus gifted—its burning and shining lights—the Church must be willing to rejoice ‘for a season,’ for much that they bring with them will depart when they go; the foreign elements will break up and scatter when the cord which binds them together is slackened by absence or unloosed by death. We see this in the lives of all men who

have been, like Xavier and Schwartz, greatly beloved by man as well as by God. Much of their work seems to vanish with them, reappearing after a time under humbler forms.

NOTE D.—P. 31.

‘THE poetry of the Psalms is formed, not like that of modern languages, by the response of answering syllables, but of answering thoughts. This peculiar form of composition was perhaps originally founded upon that correspondence, which a devout soul perceives to exist in all the creation of God, between the thing seen and unseen—a correspondence upon which the teaching of all our Lord’s parables is grounded. The two things, the thing expressing and the thing expressed, *exist together, side by side in fact*, and so they fall together, by a natural process, *side by side*, in the poetry which describes them. Thus in Psalm ciii. verses 11-13 :

The height of the heavens illustrates the boundless nature of God’s mercy :

The expanse from east to west—the distance to which he has removed our sins :

The love and pity of an earthly father—the love and pity of a heavenly one.

‘“ *So consider the works of the Most High, and there are two and two, one against another* ” (Ecclus. xxxiii. 15)’—
Plain Commentary on the Psalms.

NOTE E.—P. 32.

‘OBSERVE what vivid brightness was cast upon all parts of the Old Testament at the first appearing of the Son of God, and learn from this what will be the radiance of the Scriptures at His Second Advent. The true disciples under the Old Covenant were ever waiting, “searching,”

as St. Peter says, to discover "what the Spirit which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." But looking back to the time of Jeremiah, the Maccabees, or that of the second Temple, how strange must many passages of Scripture, now sparkling before our eyes with divine lustre, have appeared to the rationalist of the ancient synagogue! How puerile in some parts, how exaggerated and inexplicable in others, how devoid of learning and utility must have appeared to them many chapters and verses which at this day feed our faith, and fill us with a sense of the majestic unity of Scripture, cause our tears to flow, and bring weary and heavy-laden sinners to the feet of Jesus. What said they to Isaiah liii., to Psalms xxii., lxix., and many others? How strange and little worthy of the Lord must have appeared much that was contained in these, and in other Psalms, prophecies, and types descriptive of Him. Yet what Gospel truth has come forth from these! What unfolding of redeeming love! Let us therefore await even more glorious revelations in the day when our Master shall descend from heaven, for, says Irenæus, "the Scriptures contain difficulties which grace even now enables us to resolve; but there are others which we leave to God, not only as respects this generation, but those to come, in order that it may be *God perpetually teaching, and man perpetually learning* from God the things that are of God."

'Yet then shall we see the full meaning of many prophecies facts, and instructions, whose Divine character is now only seen in detached features; then will be known the import of those parables even now so impressive, of the fig-tree—of the master returning from a far country—of the bridegroom and bride—of the net drawn to the shore of eternity—of Lazarus—of the guests—of the husbandman, and of the marriage-feast. Then will be known all the glory of such expressions as these: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until thine enemies be made thy footstool." "Thy people shall be willing in the day of

thy power." "The dew of thy youth shall be of the womb of the morning." "He shall wound the head of him who rules over a great country." "He shall drink of the brook in the way, therefore shall he lift up the head."

'Then also thou wilt reveal Thyself to us in all Thy glory, Lord Jesus, Saviour, Comforter, Friend of the desolate, our Lord and our God! Thou who hast seen death, but who art alive for evermore. Then will all the knowledge of heaven be centred in Thyself—the knowledge which the Holy Ghost even now imparts, the knowledge in which Scripture even now instructs us, for "*the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*."—See conclusion of Gaussen's *Theopneustia*.

NOTE F.—P. 59.

SEE on this text a sermon by Krummacher.—*Tower Church Sermons*.

NOTE G.—P. 74.

IT is often through the sore trouble of the soul that the spirit, the part of us in which God lives, is renewed from day to day. 'When God,' says Jeremy Taylor, 'would save man, he did it *by way of a man*;' yet devotional authors seem little familiar with that fearful and beautiful thing, our sensitive and rational nature, and in their writings slender allowance is made for all that middle region of feelings and tendencies which, themselves neither good nor evil, blend with and colour for evil and for good our whole spiritual life, with which they are linked far more intimately than we imagine. In such writers, we trace but little communion with the joy and sorrow and beauty of this earth, 'glad, sad, and sweet,' so that we sometimes wonder if they have known any enjoyments, pangs, or conflicts, but such as belong to the life that is in God. To be assured that

they had joyed and sorrowed, and loved as men and women, and *as such* had felt Christ's unspeakable consolations, would be a touch of nature making them our kin. But it seldom comes. St. Thomas à Kempis, for instance, dismisses a whole world of feeling in two lines, 'Love no woman in particular, but commend all good women in general to God.' In Madame Guyon and Edwards we long, and long in vain, to see the hand of a man under the wings of the cherubim, and to feel its pressure. There is something deeply consoling in a betrayal of personal feeling, as when Doddridge laments for his little daughter, 'This day my heart hath been almost torn in pieces by sorrow, yet sorrow so softened and so sweetened, that I number it among the best days of my life. Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? God knows I am not angry, *but sorrowful He surely allows me to be.* Lord, give unto me a holy acquiescence of soul in Thee, and now that my gourd is withered, shelter me under the shadow of Thy wings.' Here we see the man (most a saint in being most a man) agonised like his Master, and like Him strengthened from on high, but by One greater than the angel.

NOTE H.—P. 86.

WHILE, as regards the great essentials of Christianity, things remain as they are,¹ not as we wish, conceive, or think of them, we cannot but perceive a diversity in the way in which we are led up to them, which answers to the infinite variety of the human spirit. We see how the great Apostle of the Gentiles, determined as he was to know and preach nothing among them but Christ and Him crucified, knew at the same time how to be all things to all men, meeting each one upon his peculiar ground, while he held his own with immovable tenacity. As that which he had

¹ Taylor.

to declare remained fixed and absolute, he did not change the truth to render it acceptable to his hearers, but, as he himself words it, *he changed his voice*, so as to bring truth before them under the aspect to which native bias or previous training rendered them most open.

We find in Mysticism a tendency to trample out rather than to train and modify the bent of nature, and this from an ardent desire for union with the Divine essence, which touches at every point upon Pantheistic absorption, and tends to substitute a blank uniformity for the energy and feature of Christian life. 'Because I live,' saith our Lord, 'ye shall live also,' and *as living*, be partakers in that which belongs to Life; freedom, expansion, and variety. It has been often remarked that each one among the branches of our Lord's great family preserves some portion of His teaching more faithfully, reflects some aspect of His character more clearly than is done by the rest, and passing from churches to individuals, we shall find that they who are in Christ will resemble *each other in so much* as they resemble Him; they will be like each other (as in earthly relationships) without being alike. Our natural characteristics are not obliterated; rather is the man renewed after Christ's likeness restored to *Himself*, that excellent thing for which God made him at the first, the type from which he had consciously fallen away.

NOTE I.—P. 113.

WHEN, and to whom has the perfect circle of Truth been visible? Certain portions of it seem always in the shade, though no portion of it can remain there long. It seems God's will that earnest and faithful-minded men should be continually from age to age bringing forwards such fragments of it as have fastened on their own minds in such strong and (relatively) undue prominence, that they are constrained to present them to the world as they arise,

where, like plants set in the ground without reference to fitness of clime and season, *they* wither, but not before they have fructified and shed seed, which, falling on a more prepared soil, brings forth fruit to perfection. The heat and extravagance with which it was at first accompanied fall off like husks from the ripened ear, and the truth which these have kept warm, while it had to push its way through cold, earthy obstructions, unfolds in its fulness. In the physical world this holds true of the secrets which disentangled themselves from the follies of alchemy, and perhaps applies to many systems of our present day, which, containing a vital essence of truth, overlaid with much that is fantastic, will themselves die out, yet under other conditions exert an influence on general science. So in the moral and spiritual world we see forms perishing *because* of the life that is in them. We say Quakerism has decayed and dwindled; but why? even because the wide and loving principles it promulgated in an age of dreary spiritual exclusivism, have been, since the days of the Early Friends (the first apostles of so many a holy cause), gradually and silently incorporated into the thoughts of Christian men in general. *They*, as Howitt says, have missed being a great people, but the truths they so simply and perseveringly advocated, have *not* failed of their mark. Neander, speaking of reformers of the heart only, guided by the pure will without the reflective wisdom, says, 'Their efforts are as a fire catching rapidly at all around it, but working rather destructively than as an abiding warmth or a clear diffusive blaze. . . . Before the coming of a great light its approach is heralded by lesser lights, which, after shining in the darkness, seem to disappear. Before a decisive and general triumph of the right, its way is first cleansed by the blood of victims who have fallen in its cause, and by attempts that miscarry because they were untimely. But a voice from the Past (the world's history) assures us that he who goeth forth to do battle for the right simply is sure of victory, as, although he should be himself overpowered,

and his work for a season defeated, he has yet thereby contributed to the final triumph of the right in its proper time.'

The design of the Almighty is like that of the vast cathedrals of old at which many generations of workmen were content to labour in succession; each helping to carry out some part of the magnificent plan, each building up some part of his life and strength in the mighty structure whose completion he could never hope to witness.

'They shall perish, but thou remainest;
And they all shall wax old as a garment,
And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up,
And they are changed;
But thou art the same! and thy years shall not fail;
*The children of thy servants shall continue,
And their seed shall stand fast in thy sight.'*

NOTE K.—P. 121.

'AND I, my loving Brentius,' writes Luther, 'to the end that I may the better understand this case, do use to think in this manner, namely, as if in my heart were no quality or virtue at all which is called faith or love, but I set all on Christ, and say, my *formalis justitia*, that is, my sure, my constant and complete righteousness, in which there is no want or failing, but is as before God it ought to be, is Christ my Lord and Saviour.'

Faith saves us; but how?—by making us aware of Christ, who saves. Faith does not *make* things what they are, but *shows* us them as they are in Christ. Certain systems lay a pressure upon the subjective side greater than the spirit of man is at all times able to bear; working out all things from the depths of individual consciousness, *as if truths were not there at all until they are (manifestly) there for us*. Wesley, for instance, felt and preached Christ both freely and fully; yet from the central importance his teaching

gives to a conscious spiritual work in man, it tends, in some degree, to withdraw the soul's eye from Christ, to fix it upon what is going on within itself.

Happy for us, if Christ can look there and find His own image reflected, however faintly ; but *we* must look at Him, at the sun in the heavens, not at the sun in the brook, its broken and ever-varying reflection. So long as we are resting in anything within ourselves, be it even in a work of grace, there remains, at least to honest hearts, a ground for continual restlessness and continual disappointment. To know that we have nothing, are nothing, out of Christ, is to know the truth which makes us free.

NOTE L.—P. 124.

THE Christian's life is no Drama planned to correspond with certain prescribed Unities of time and situation ; but *because it is a life*, it is too solemn, too real a thing to be bounded by any such limitations. The Bible prescribes no fixed routine of religious experience, and I know not how to express my sense of the crudity, I would also say cruelty, of such religious writings as insist upon certain phases of feeling as being essential to every true conversion ; thus making sad the heart of the righteous whom God hath not made sad. '*The Gods*,' said the wise Heathen, '*give not all things to men at all times.*' Have Christians yet to learn that certain feelings are only proper, say rather are only *possible*, to certain stages of experience? *That when we are able to receive things we do receive them*, and until then must be content to wait, *abiding in the truth*, growing up in it from day to day, but forcing nothing either upon ourselves or others.

How carefully should we guard against the passing of a religious truth into a religious conventionalism ! The deepest expressions of feeling, as when St. Paul, seeing so far into his own nature, and into God's purity, *is able* to call himself

the chief of sinners, become *false, commonplace*, when taken up by those who do not feel but merely repeat them—when they are out of all harmony with the life and consciousness of the speaker.

We may apply this also to the crude admonitions so often addressed to afflicted people ; the set phrases in which, without any consideration of his fitness to receive such sayings, the sufferer is referred to the will of God, the love of Christ, for compensation. Yet the loss of a felt, experienced good, even of an earthly kind, can only be made up for by a comfort equally felt and experienced, *and how can that be a comfort which has never been a joy ?*

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